



HELMET AND SPEAR

STORIES FROM THE WARS OF THE GREEKS AND ROMANS

By the

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"Yea, but of war the righteous last event

In highest Heaven is born,

And from great Zeus with saving power is sent."

AESCHYLUS, *Seven against Thebes*.

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FLIGHT OF THE PERSIANS AFTER MARATHON.

PREFACE

I HAVE told again in this volume some familiar stories, using mostly the original authorities, but availing myself, where it was possible, of the help of Plutarch, whose biographies are always rich in picturesque details. These narratives never lose their interest, and they have this special significance, that they illustrate what we all at least desire to believe, that results of abiding good come out of the losses and sorrows of war. I have sought to draw out this thought with some detail in my Epilogue.

A. J. C.

IGHTHAM, SEVENOAKS.

September 8, 1900.

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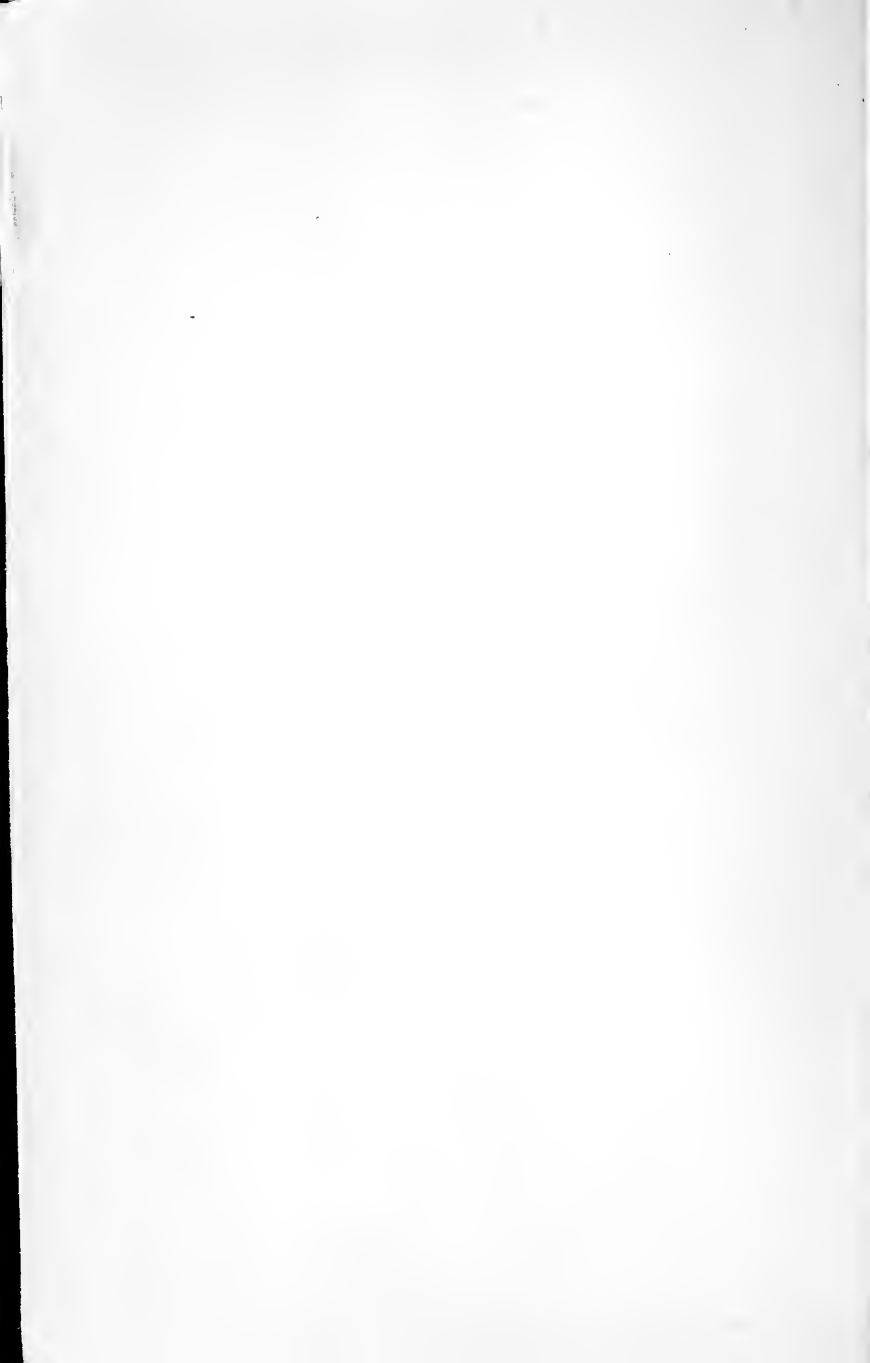


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To

MY DAUGHTERS



BOOK I

GREECE AND PERSIA. THE DEFENCE

I. THE MEN OF MARATHON

WE may say of wars what a famous philosopher said of revolutions, that they happen about little things, but spring from great causes. When Herodotus at the beginning of his History proceeds to put on record the grounds of the great feud between the Greeks and the Barbarians, he tells us of various outrages committed by one party or the other. The Phœnicians began by carrying off Io, daughter of Inachus ; the Greeks retaliated by landing at Tyre and bearing away the king's daughter Europé. This they followed by the capture of Medea, a princess of Colchi. When Paris of Troy ran away with the fair Helen from Sparta he was only setting

the account straight. It was then that, according to the Persian sages, with whom Herodotus seems to agree, the Greeks made a fatal mistake. They actually led a great army into Asia to recover a worthless woman, though "men of sense care nothing about such people."

The fact is that the Greeks, as a very enterprising and active race, came into frequent collision with their Eastern neighbours. We catch glimpses of this in very remote times. To these, however, we need not go back. Towards the end of the eighth or early in the seventh century B.C., the kings of Lydia began to encroach on their Greek neighbours and conquered city after city. Cræsus, who was the last of the dynasty, had made himself master of all of them before he was himself overthrown by Cyrus the Persian. This event meant nothing for the Greeks but a change of masters, and this was not a change for the better. Lydians and Greeks had long been neighbours, and could contrive to live on tolerable terms. The Persians were strangers from a remote country, and were of a harsher temper. In 502 B.C. a general rebellion took place, in the course of which Sardis, the local capital of the Persians, was burnt. A contingent of Athenian troops took part in this

affair, and their presence was the immediate cause of the great struggle that followed. The war between Greece and Persia lasted, with intervals of doubtful peace, something less than 180 years. The first great conflict was at Marathon.

In the late summer of 490 B.C. the Persian army landed at the Bay of Marathon, distant from Athens about twenty miles as the crow flies, about twenty-five by the only road practicable for wheeled conveyances. Of the Persian numbers we know nothing. Herodotus, who is our best authority (born in 480, he probably talked with men who had fought in the battle), gives no figures. Later writers speak of impossible numbers, 600,000 being the largest, 110,000 the smallest estimate. To carry even 110,000 across the Ægean sea would have been a heavy task. If a guess has to be made, one may venture to say 60,000. The Athenians numbered 10,000, and they had with them 1,000 men from Plataea, a little Bœotian town, which they had recently taken under their protection. The Plain of Marathon is about six miles long from south-west to north-east, and in breadth varies from two and a half to one and a-half miles. On the north-east it is bounded by a great marsh, which is divided from the

sea by a narrow slip of land. There is another smaller marsh on the south-west. Along the edge of this swamp ran the road to Athens. It was probably the immediate object of Datis, the Persian general, to seize this road, and of the Athenian commanders to protect it. Their right wing rested on the seaward slope of what is now called Agrieliki, the north-eastern spur of Pentelicus. About a mile from this may still be seen the remains of the mound which was raised over the bones of the Athenians slain in the battle. It is probable that this marks the spot where the fight raged most fiercely. If this is so, the Persian lines must have been advanced to within a short distance of the rising ground.

The Athenians, on learning the actual approach of the Persian forces, had sent a swift runner to Sparta to beg for help. The man reached Sparta, a distance of about one hundred and forty miles, in less than forty-eight hours ("on the second day" is the expression). The Spartans promised to come, but could not start, they said, till after the full moon, which was then five days off. The question then among the Athenian generals—there were ten in number and had each his day of command—was whether they should fight at once or wait

for the Spartan contingent. The ten generals who shared the command of the army were equally divided in opinion. But Miltiades, the most distinguished of their number, was eager for instant action, and succeeded in winning over to his views Callimachus the Polemarch, with whom it lay, in case of an equal division, to give the casting vote. We shall see that he had good reasons for his action, and that his promptitude saved Athens ; and, we may say, Greece.

The centre of the Persian line of battle was held by the native Persians and Sacæ, these latter a tribe now represented by the Turcomans. Of the rest of the formation we are told nothing. Some cavalry they had, but it is not mentioned as taking any part in the battle. It has been conjectured that it had not been disembarked when the battle was fought. It would certainly have been difficult to get the horses on board again, and if any number of them had been captured, we should probably have heard something about it. The Athenian line was drawn up so as to be equal in length to the Persian. To effect this it was, of course, necessary to make it very thin in parts. This was the case in the centre, where there were but two or three files. No light armed

soldiers, no archers, no cavalry were present. All were heavy armed men with a few slaves in attendance. The right wing was commanded by Callimachus ; the Platæans were on the left.

There was, as has been said, a space of a mile between the two armies. Miltiades ordered the Athenians to cross this at a run. Such a thing had never been done before in regular warfare. It was an amazing feat of strength, for the men were in heavy armour. Not less remarkable was the courage of the movement, for in those days the Greeks had not learned to look down upon the Persians. To the enemy the charge seemed to be the act of madmen ; but they must have felt that such madmen were dangerous enemies, and must have been shaken in the confidence with which they had looked forward to victory. Still they stood their ground, and met their assailants in hand-to-hand fight. They even broke the centre of the Athenian line, which, as has been said, was but two or three files deep. Herodotus even says that "they pursued them into the middle country," a curious phrase, seeing that the battle was fought only a mile or so from the sea shore. But in hand-to-hand fighting, when the conditions were at all equal, the Persians

were no match, either in training or in equipment, for their adversaries. The poet Æschylus, himself "a man of Marathon," the proudest title which an Athenian could bear, speaks of the war of the Persian against the Greek as the battle of the bow against the spear. In the *Persæ*, the drama which celebrates the crushing defeat of Persia in its second assault on Greece, he makes the chorus, consisting of the Great King's councillors, boast of how their lord would bid

"The arrows' iron hail advance
Against the cumbrous moving lance ;"

a happy stroke of irony when it was known that the lance had prevailed over the arrow. It certainly prevailed that day. Both the wings were victorious in the shock of arms, and when they had put to flight the ranks opposed to them they turned to restore the fortune of the day in the centre. This they soon accomplished. Before long the whole Persian line was in rapid retreat. Pausanias says that many of the fugitives rushed into the marsh, and, indeed, that the greater part of their loss was thus caused.

Miltiades, anxious to complete his victory, followed up the flying enemy, and endeavoured

to cut off his retreat. Here he was less successful, and, indeed, incurred serious loss. In the attempt to burn the Persian ships not a few distinguished Athenians fell. The Polemarch and another of the generals were among them ; so was a brother of the poet Æschylus, who, having laid hold of one of the ships, had his hand cut off by an axe, and died of the wound. The Persians contrived to get away, not losing more than seven of their ships, but leaving behind them in their richly furnished tents an ample booty for the conquerors.

Athens, however, was not yet safe. Hippias, who along with his brother had once held despotic power in the city, and had been driven into exile twenty years before, had come with the Persian army, hoping that his friends—for he still had a party that plotted for his return—would move in his favour. They did not altogether fail him. When the Persians had re-embarked, a signal—a polished shield flashing in the sunlight—was perceived on the summit of Pentelicus. This was to indicate that the Persians should take advantage of the absence of the army and sail round to Athens, and that the party of Hippias was ready to act. Part of the fleet accordingly took the direction of Cape Sunium, which it would have to round

before it could reach Athens. Miltiades seems to have been aware of what was intended, and at once gave orders to march back to Athens with all haste. This was done, and the traitors were foiled. The Persian fleet, it will be seen from the map, would have to make a circuit of about sixty miles, while the army would have to march less than half that distance.

The Persian loss is put down by Herodotus at 6,200, a moderate figure which is very probably near the truth. Of the Athenians, one hundred and ninety-two were slain. They were buried on the field of battle, and a mound heaped over their remains. On the top of this were placed ten stone pillars, one for each of the Athenian tribes, inscribed with the names of the slain. An eleventh pillar commemorated the Plataeans, a twelfth the slaves who fell in the great victory. After the death of Miltiades a monument was erected to him on the same spot. The pillars have long since perished, but the mound remains. It is thirty feet high and about 200 yards in circumference. It was excavated in 1890-91 by order of the Greek Government, and found to contain human remains, with pottery of the very period of the battle. Writing about six centuries later, Pausanias says, "Here every night you

may hear horses neighing and men fighting," and adds that it brings bad luck to go out of curiosity, but that "with him who unwittingly lights upon it by accident the spirits are not angry." The same tradition lingers about many of the great battlefields of the world. Shepherds who fed their flocks on the plains of Troy saw spectres in armour, and conspicuous among them the spirit of the great Achilles. The scenes of the great battles of Attila and Charlemagne are still said to be thus haunted.

It only remains to say that 2,000 Spartans arrived on the day after the battle, that they went to the field of battle to see the Persian dead, and after greatly praising the Athenians, returned home.

II

THE LION KING

DARIUS was not by any means disposed to take his repulse at Marathon as final. On the contrary, he at once set to work on making preparations for a new expedition, which should this time be one of overwhelming force, and which he determined to lead in person. A revolt which broke out in Egypt probably delayed him for a time. Anyhow, he died in 485 before his preparations were complete. He had reigned for thirty-six years and was probably in his sixty-eighth year. Xerxes, the eldest of the sons born after his accession to the throne, succeeded him without any opposition. He is said to have been averse to the scheme of an invasion, but was persuaded by those who were interested in promoting it. However this may be, the preparations were not seriously interrupted.

The Egyptian insurrection was put down, and in the autumn of 481 the army intended for the invasion of Greece was assembled at Sardis. The story of the events that followed must be sought elsewhere, for I am not attempting to give a narrative of the Persian war. It must suffice to say that by August, 490, the Persian army had occupied Thessaly. It was at the famous pass which leads from this region into Locris that the Greeks made their first stand.

Thermopylæ (the Hot Gates) consisted of two narrow passes, neither of them of greater width than one wheeled carriage would require, caused by the near approach of Mount Cæta to the sea, or rather to an impassable morass which here formed the coast-line. (It is well to remark that considerable changes have taken place in the character of the country, the coast-line, in particular, having receded a long way eastward.) The easternmost of the two passes was that to which the name properly belonged, for here there were actual hot springs, dedicated to Hercules, and supplying medicinal baths. Between the two passes (the distance of a mile) the mountain receded from the sea, leaving a level space of about half a mile broad. At Thermopylæ proper there was a

wall built by the Locrians, but at the time of which we are speaking it had fallen into ruins.

It was here that Leonidas, one of the two kings of Sparta, took up his position, late, it would seem, in July. He had with him 300 Spartans, 2,500 soldiers from other parts of the Peloponnesus, a contingent of 700 from Thespiæ, one of the Bœotian towns, which dissented strongly from the pro-Persian views of their countrymen, and 400 Thebans, who came on compulsion. Thebes did not venture to refuse the demands of Leonidas while their Persian friends were still a long way off. He was also joined by contingents of the Locrians and Phocians. Both tribes had given in or were about to give in their submission to the Persians, but probably preferred the success of the Greeks. In any case, they were not prepared to resist the Greek commander-in-chief, present as he was with a much superior force.

Leonidas at once strengthened his position by repairing the half-ruined wall by the Hot Springs. But he learnt that Thermopylæ was not the only way by which access could be had from northern to southern Greece. The Phocians informed him that there was a mountain path which led from a point beyond

the westernmost pass to another point beyond the defile of the Hot Springs. But they promised that they would guard it. The fact came, of course, to the knowledge of the troops generally, and greatly discouraged them. They even wished to abandon Thermopylæ altogether. Those that came from the Peloponnese were especially urgent, believing that they had a much better position for defence in the Isthmus of Corinth. Leonidas refused to retreat, but he sent messengers to the various Greek States with an urgent demand for reinforcements. The forces that he had with him were wholly unequal, he said, to cope with such an army as the Persians had at their command.

Xerxes, who had encamped within sight of Thermopylæ, sent a horseman to reconnoitre the position of Leonidas. The Spartans were on guard that day in front of the wall, and the man observed that some were engaged in athletic exercises, while others were combing their long hair. Demaratus, an exiled king of Sparta, who was with Xerxes, when questioned about the meaning of this behaviour, told him that his countrymen were particularly careful with their toilet when engaged in any dangerous enterprise, and that he must expect a desperate

resistance. "You have to deal," he went on, "with the first city of Greece, and with her bravest men." "But how can so small a company contend with mine," asked Xerxes, who had not yet learnt to doubt his big battalions. The king was unwilling to believe him, and waited for four days in the expectation that the Greeks would think better of their purpose to resist, and would retire without a conflict.

On the fifth day, finding that the Greeks were still in their positions, Xerxes sent the Medes and the men of Cissia (now Khuzistan) with instructions to take the Greeks alive and bring them into his presence. These troops rushed with the greatest courage to the attack. Many were slain, for indeed they were no match for the Greeks in hand-to-hand fighting, but others stepped into their places. The struggle went on during the whole day, with no result except heavy loss to the assailants. On the morrow Xerxes sent his Persian *corps d'élite*, which went by the name of the "Immortals," to the attack, confident that they would be able to force the pass. They met with no better success. Their spears were shorter than those used by the Greeks, and the narrowness of the battlefield did not allow

them to take advantage of their superiority in numbers. Herodotus makes special mention of the practised skill which the Spartans displayed. One of their methods was to feign flight, lure the assailants on, and then turn on them with deadly effect. Vast numbers of the Persians were slain; the Greeks also suffered some loss, for the best troops of the East could not have fought wholly in vain, but this loss was very small. Thrice during the day's engagement the Persian king is said to have leapt from the seat from which he watched the combat in terror for his army.

Yet another day was spent in a fruitless assault on the Greek position. The Persians hoped to wear out the enemy by incessant attacks. Some must be slain or wounded, and when the total number was so small, even a small loss must tell upon them in the end. As a matter of fact, however, the strength of the Greeks was not sensibly impaired. The space of ground that had to be held was very small, and the Greeks could change their men actually engaged at frequent intervals.

The treachery of a native of Malis, a little Dorian state in the heart of the mountains, relieved Xerxes of his perplexity. He offered, for a reward, to show a mountain path by which

the Greek position could be turned. The name of this wretch, on whose head a price was set by the General Council of the Greek States, was Ephialtes. It is doubtful whether the secret could have been long kept; but there seems to have been a general agreement that Ephialtes was the guilty man, though other names were mentioned.

Xerxes willingly purchased the secret, and entrusted the task of outflanking the Greek position to the Immortals. They started at dusk and marched all night. The Phocian guards of the path seem to have neglected to place any outposts, and were not aware of the approach of the enemy till the crackling of the leaves under their feet, carried through the still air of night, gave them warning. They started up from their bivouack at the sound, and the Persians, surprised at the sight of an enemy whose presence they had not expected, halted. The Phocians seem not to have attempted to hold the path, but retreated to the crest of the hill and then made ready to defend themselves. The Persians left them alone, and continued their march.

The Greeks at Thermopylæ had by this time received warning of what had happened. The soothsayer attached to the force is said

to have read in the victims which he examined a prognostic of their fate. More definite information came from scouts who had been out on the hills, and who now came hurrying into the camp with the news. A council of war was hastily held. It could not agree, but the result was that the majority of the contingents retreated. Whether they did this with or without the orders of Leonidas is not certain. It is one of the matters about which it is almost impossible to arrive at the truth. Herodotus thinks that they were ordered to retire by Leonidas because he saw that they were unwilling to stay. This has a look of probability. As for Leonidas himself and his Spartans, they elected to stay. The inflexible military honour of their commonwealth forbade retreat. The seven hundred Thespians refused to depart, and must be allowed the glory of a still more heroic courage.¹ The Theban contingent was detained against its will. The soothsayer Megistias—his name ought to be preserved no less carefully than

¹ Canon Rawlinson does not show himself as acute as usual when he suggests that this splendid resolve of the Thespians was due to an ambition of dispossessing Thebes from the headship of the Bœotian confederacy. Mr. Grote's remark that they knew that they must be left homeless is more to the point.

that of the traitor Ephialtes—refused to depart, though being not a Spartan, but an Acamanian by birth, he might have done so without discredit, but he sent away his only son. The name of the Thespian leader ought also to have its place on the roll of honour. It was Demophilus.

In the forenoon the Persians began a double attack, in front and in rear. They had seen such proofs of Greek prowess that the men had to be driven into battle by the whip. As for the Greeks, they changed their tactics. Leaving the pass of the Hot Springs and the wall, they advanced into the open space. Hope of escape or victory had been given up. They would fight where they could sell their lives most dearly. And dearly did they sell them. Crowds of the Persians fell; many were trampled under foot by their comrades; many more were thrust into the marsh that bordered the road on the side of the sea. Among the slain were two brothers of the king. The Spartans and Thespians fought till their spears were broken. Leonidas seems to have fallen early in the day, and there was a furious struggle for the possession of his body. Four times did the barbarians carry it off, and four times was it recovered. As the day drew on the Immortals

came upon the scene. Aware of their approach, the Greeks retreated to the pass and prolonged their resistance to the very uttermost. When their weapons failed them they used their hands and even their teeth. But the Persians now surrounded them and showered arrows and all kinds of missiles upon them. They perished to a man. One more name from among the three hundred Spartans must be preserved—Dieneces, who seems to have been a wit as well as a warrior. When a man of Trachis told him that the Persians were so numerous that their arrows would darken the sun, "'Tis well," he replied, "stranger; then we shall fight in the shade." One of the contingent was absent. He and a comrade had been lying sick of ophthalmia at a neighbouring village. They could not agree as to what should be done. One buckled on his armour and bade his attendant helot lead him—for he could not see—to the battlefield. The helot did so, and then turned and fled. His master plunged into the thick of the fight and fell. The other sick man returned to Sparta. There no one would give him light to kindle his fire, or speak to him. He wiped away the reproach by falling, after prodigies of valour, at Plataea.

III

IN THE STRAITS

WHILE the army of the allied Greeks was holding the pass of Thermopylæ, their fleet occupied Artemisium. This was a promontory at the northern end of the island of Eubœa, a small stretch of coast on either side of the actual cape being known by the same name. The Persian attack was being made both by land and sea, and the Greek plan of defence was to check it at two points which were as nearly as possible in a line.

Both positions were liable to be turned. The danger at Artemisium was even greater than at Thermopylæ, for there was nothing to prevent the Persian fleet from sailing down the east coast of Eubœa. Indeed we shall see that this was done, though, as it turned out, without any ill result to the Greeks. It is clear that the officers in command of the fleet were quite

as uneasy as some of the army leaders at Thermopylæ, nor was there any one who could exercise the control that Leonidas, in virtue of his commanding personality and his rank as a Spartan king, exercised over the allies.

An event of no great importance turned this uneasiness into panic. Two out of three ships which had been detached to keep a look out were captured by an advanced Persian squadron of ten ships. In consequence of this disaster, the fleet hastily retreated some fifty miles to the south to a spot where the channel between the mainland and Eubœa is at its narrowest. It would probably have gone still further south but for the heavy loss which the Persian fleet suffered during a four days' storm. No less than four hundred ships were destroyed, and with them an uncounted multitude of men. The Greeks were so encouraged by the loss which had befallen the enemy, that they returned in all haste and took up their former station. Hence the battle of Artemisium.

The first incident was a Greek success. The Persian fleet took up its position in the great natural harbour which is now known as the Gulf of Volo. Fifteen ships belonging to it lagged so far behind the rest, that by the time

they reached the south-eastern point of the gulf the main body had rounded it and were out of sight. But the Greek fleet was full in view; they mistook it for their own, sailed straight towards it, and were captured without a struggle. Notwithstanding this stroke of good fortune the Greek captains were full of fears. Even after the losses caused by the storm, the Persian fleet greatly outnumbered their own. They had two hundred and eighty ships, reckoning nine fifty-oars with the larger triremes or "three-bankers"; the Persians must have had more than twice as many. The question of retreat again came up, and seemed very likely to be decided in the affirmative. A different result was brought about by a proceeding curiously characteristic of Greek ways of acting and thinking. The people of Eubœa were in despair at the prospect of being deserted. It would be something, they thought, if they could secure a few days' grace in which to remove their portable property to a place of safety. They went to Eurybiades, the Spartan admiral, who was in supreme command, and begged him to postpone his departure for a short time. He refused the request. It would not, he said, be for the public interest. Then they went to Themistocles, the Athenian

admiral. He was not the commander-in-chief, but he commanded the most numerous contingent, one hundred and twenty-seven ships, only thirteen short of the half. They offered him a splendid bribe of thirty talents (about £7,000 of our money) if he could procure for them the desired delay. Themistocles seems to have known the price of the men whom he had to buy. To Eurybiades he gave five talents, and the Spartan, to whom this sum probably seemed a fortune, changed his views about the public safety. The Corinthian commander, who had the most powerful squadron after that of Athens, had also to be bought. Themistocles dealt with him in the frankest way. "I will give you," he said, "more for staying than the Persians will give you for going." The Corinthian does not seem to have resented the suggestion that he was ready to be bribed by the enemies of his country, and accepted the two talents which Themistocles sent on board his ship. The Athenian kept the handsome balance in his own hands. We cannot say anything more for him than that he comes out of the transaction better than his colleagues. They believed that the better and safer course was to retreat. He, on the contrary, was convinced that the

right policy was to stop and fight. But he never forgot his personal interests. In this case he made them harmonise; on other occasions his action was more doubtful. There is reason to think that, before the end of his career, he postponed the public good to his own.

The Persians, when they saw that the Greek fleet was still at Artemisium, had, it would seem, no thought but of how they might make sure of capturing the whole. They sent a squadron of two hundred ships to sail down the eastern coast of Eubœa. These were to take the Greek in the rear, the main body waiting till the arrival of the squadron had been signalled. Meanwhile the Greeks had received some encouraging intelligence. A Greek diver, named Scyllias,¹ who had been in

¹ Pausanias tells us that he saw at Delphi a statue of this Scyllias, which had been erected by the Amphictyonic Council. A statue of his daughter Hydna had formerly stood next to it, but had been carried off by Nero. The two were famous divers, and some marvellous legends had gathered about them. Pausanias was told that they had dragged away the anchors and moorings of the Persian ships during the storm, and so aggravated the disaster. Herodotus had heard a yet more marvellous story of how Scyllias had dived the whole distance, nearly ten miles, between the Persian station and the Greek, but adds characteristically, "My own opinion is that he made the passage in a boat."

the employ of the Persians, deserted to them. He described the damage that had been done by the storm, and also informed them about the squadron that had been sent round Eubœa. The first thought of the Greek admirals was to sail south, and meet this squadron. But on reflection, bolder counsels prevailed. Late in the afternoon they left their station, and sailed towards the hostile fleet. The Persians viewed the movement with astonishment, and the Asiatic Greeks with dismay, for though serving with the enemy, they wished well to their countrymen. The Greek ships were inferior, not only in numbers, but also in equipment, and they seemed to be rushing on destruction.

The Greeks began by assuming what seemed like a defensive position, forming a circle, with the sterns of their ships in close order, and the prows turned to the enemy. The enemy advanced to close with them, and then, at a concerted signal, the Greeks dashed at their opponents with such success that they captured thirty of their ships, the first prize falling, as indeed was fitting, to an Athenian ship. The Persians, recovered from the first surprise, began to hold their own better, and when night fell, the issue of the conflict was still doubtful. The captain of a ship from the island of

Lemnos had the sagacity to see how the struggle would end, and deserted to the Greeks, receiving afterwards a handsome reward for his timely patriotism.

Again the "stars fought in their courses for Greece." That night there was a thunder-storm, with heavy rain and wind. The main body of the fleet did not suffer much material damage, but the crews were dismayed to see fragments of wrecks and bodies of the dead drifted in by the wind. These were, indeed, the tokens of a great disaster. The squadron that was sent round Eubœa had been driven on a lee shore and absolutely destroyed. On the morrow the Persians made no movement, but the Greeks repeated the tactics of the day before. The news of the disaster to the Persian squadron had reached them, and they had been joined by a reinforcement of Athenian ships. This gave them new courage besides increasing their strength. Before the close of the day they captured some Cilician ships.

On the third day the Persian commanders, made desperate by failure, for they served a master who exacted a cruel penalty for ill-success, moved forward to engage the enemy, the Greeks awaiting their attack. The order of the Persian attack was in the shape of a

half-moon, and its object to outflank the enemy on either side. The Greeks accepted the challenge. The result was not decisive. The Greeks sunk and captured more ships than they themselves lost. But their own loss was serious. Of the Athenian fleet especially, more than half was so injured as to require repair. By this time, too, the position had ceased to have any strategic value. The pass of Thermopylæ had been forced by the Persians, and it was useless, therefore, to hold Artemisium. That night the Greek fleet retired southwards. Themistocles, before he went, caused to be engraved on a prominent rock an inscription which invited the Asiatic Greeks serving with the Persians to make common cause with their countrymen. "If these words," he reasoned with himself, "escape the knowledge of the king, they may bring these Greeks over to us; if they come to his knowledge, they will make him distrust them."

IV

THE WOODEN WALLS

THE retreat of the Greek forces from Thermopylæ and Artemisium left Athens without defence. There had been a promise that an army of the allies should make a stand against the invaders in Bœotia. No attempt was made to keep it. The only plan of defence that commended itself to the Peloponnesian States was to fortify the Isthmus of Corinth—and all the states outside the Peloponnesus, Athens excepted, were either pro-Persian or indifferent. As Athens was unwallèd, there was no question of defending it; the only thing that could be done was to save as much life and property as was possible. For this the time was short, and might have been shorter than it actually was, for the Athenians had six days in which to transport their belongings to a place of safety,

though the distance to be traversed by the invaders was not more than ninety miles. All the women, children, and persons incapacitated by illness or old age were put on shipboard, and carried either to Trœzen, a friendly city in the peninsula of Argolis, which had some tie of kinship with Athens, to Ægina, which was but ten miles away, or to Salamis, which was even nearer. The Athenians begged the allies to remain in the neighbourhood till the work of transport was accomplished, and Salamis happened to be the most convenient spot for this purpose.

The whole fighting strength of Athens was now embarked in its fleet. Years before, Themistocles, with a sagacity and prescience that seem almost miraculous, had counselled his countrymen to spend all their available resources in building ships. And only a few months before, the oracle of Delphi had advised the Athenians to trust in their "wooden wall," a phrase which this same statesman had interpreted as meaning the ships. No one, we may believe, knew better what it meant, as he had probably suggested it. The time had now come to put this counsel into practice. Every able-bodied Athenian took service in the fleet, the wealthy aristocrats, known as the

“knights,” setting the examples by hanging up their bridles in the temple of Athené.

It had never been the intention of the officers in command of the allied fleet to give battle at Salamis. They thought of nothing but the safety of the Peloponnesus; possibly they believed that nothing more than this could be hoped for. But when the Athenians, compelled as they were to abandon their city, asked for their help in saving non-combatants and such property as could be removed, they could not refuse. And now the question presented itself—Where are we to meet the Persian fleet? The captains assembled in the ship of Eurybiades the Spartan, who was in chief command, and debated on what was to be done. The general opinion was that they should retire from Salamis, from which there would be great difficulty in escaping, if escape should become necessary, and give battle somewhere off the coast of the Peloponnesus. In the midst of the discussion a messenger arrived with the news that the Persians had overrun all Attica, and had taken by storm the citadel of Athens, which a few enthusiasts had insisted on defending. These tidings could not have taken any one by surprise, but the fact that one of the great cities of Greece had fallen

into the hands of the barbarians produced a panic. Some of the captains left without waiting for the decision of the council, and, hurrying to their own squadrons, prepared to depart. Those who stayed resolved to retire to the Isthmus and make a stand there.

As Themistocles was returning to his ship from the council, he was met by a friend who, in bygone years, had been his instructor in philosophy. The new-comer, on hearing the decision at which the council had arrived, denounced it most emphatically. "It means ruin for Greece," he said. "The fleet will not remain together to fight; every contingent will steal away, hoping to protect its own country. Go and persuade Eurybiades to reconsider the question."

Themistocles went, and using every argument that he could think of, at last succeeded in making such an impression on Eurybiades that he consented to summon another council. Of course it was the etiquette for the commander-in-chief to state the business which they had met to discuss, but Themistocles, who saw that it was a matter of life and death, could not help urging his case, without waiting for the president of the council.

Adeimantus, of Corinth, angrily interrupted him. "Themistocles," he said, "at the Games, they who start too soon are scourged." "True," replied the Athenian, "but they who start too late are not crowned." He then addressed the council in a tone of studied mildness and conciliation. He said nothing about the probability that the fleet would be broken up by a general desertion—such an argument would have been affront—but he urged that to fight at Salamis would not be to risk everything on the issue of one battle. To retreat would be to leave all northern Greece at the mercy of the Persians, while a defeat at the Isthmus would mean the loss of the Peloponnesus itself. As for the Athenians, they would loyally abide by any decision to which the allies might come.

Adeimantus, enraged at the Athenian's persistence, interrupted him with the remark that a man who had no country had no right to speak, and even appealed to Eurybiades to impose silence upon him. Themistocles then saw that it was time to assert himself. "With two hundred ships fully manned and armed we have," he said, turning to Adeimantus, "as good a country as any man here, for what state could resist us should we choose to attack

it?" Then he addressed himself to Eurybiades. "Play the man and all will be well. All depends upon our ships. If you will not stay here and fight, we will take our families on board and sail for Italy, where the gods have provided us a home. Without us, what will you do?"

To this threat there was no answer. The council resolved to stay and fight.

But the matter was not really settled. The Peloponnesian contingents were determined, in the last resort, to disobey their chief, and Themistocles was aware of their determination. Only one course remained for him, and it required the courage of despair to take it. If the allies would not stay at Salamis of their own free will, they must do it by compulsion. He sent a trusted slave to the Persian admiral with this message: "The Athenian commander is a well-wisher to the King, and he informs you that the Greeks are seized with fear, and are about to retreat from Salamis. It is for you to hinder their flight." A more daring stratagem was never put into execution. Not the least strange circumstance about it is the fact that, years after, when Themistocles had fallen into disgrace at home, he successfully claimed as a service to the Persian king that

he had given him the chance of destroying the whole of the Greek fleet at one blow.

The Persian commanders seem not to have suspected the good faith of the communication thus received, and at once set about closing in the Greek ships. The town of Salamis was built in a little bay on the eastern side of the island, the distance across to the mainland of Attica being about two miles. The Greek fleet was drawn up, in what may be described as the shape of a bow loosely strung, in front of the town; the Persian ships were ranged along the opposite, *i.e.*, the Attic shore. Both to the north and to the south the channel narrowed, being less than a mile across. The Persians now extended their line northwards till it touched the shore of the island, and southwards till it reached an uninhabited island called Psyttaleia. On this island they landed a body of troops who were to help the crews of any of their own ships that might be damaged, and slaughter any Greek soldiers or sailors who might be in a similar plight.

While these preparations were going on—and they lasted nearly through the night—the Greek leaders still hotly debated the question of going or staying. An unexpected end was put to the controversy. The chief

opponent of Themistocles in Athenian politics was Aristides. He had been banished, and, at the instance of his successful rival, recalled from banishment when the danger of a Persian invasion became imminent. He now came to join his countrymen, and brought startling tidings with him. He had come from the island of Ægina, which lay some twelve miles to the south of Salamis, and his ship had narrowly escaped capture in making its way into the bay of Salamis; only the darkness had made it possible to do so. Themistocles was fetched out from the council to hear the tidings. "I hope," said Aristides, "that always, and now especially, our strife will be who may do his best service to his country. As for the question of going or staying, it matters nothing whether the Peloponnesians talk much or little. Go they cannot. We are enclosed on every side. This I have seen with my own eyes."

"This is good news," replied Themistocles, "for the Persians have done exactly what I wished. Our men, who would not fight of their own free will, will now be made to fight." And he told him of what he had done. "And now go and tell them. If I was to say it, they would not believe me."

Aristides accordingly went in to the council and told them his news. Many of them refused to believe it, but when a ship from the island of Tenos that had deserted from the Persians confirmed the report, there was nothing more to say. All that could be done was to make all the preparation possible for a conflict which had become inevitable.

Of the battle we have two accounts, that of Herodotus, derived doubtless from one or more persons who had taken part in it, and that of Æschylus, who actually fought there as he had fought before at Marathon. The two accounts substantially agree, but they differ in the number of Greek ships engaged. Herodotus says that there were 378, made up to the round number of 380 by the Tenian ship which deserted on the night before the battle, and a ship from Lemnos, which had done the same at Artemisium. He gives the number of each contingent, the largest being 180 contributed by Athens, while 89 came from the states of the Peloponnesus, and 57 from Ægina and Eubœa. One ship only came from Greece beyond the sea. Even this was a private rather than a public contribution. A certain Phayllus of Crotona furnished a ship at his own expense, and manned it with fellow-

citizens who were sojourning in Greece. Pausanias saw his statue at Delphi six centuries afterwards. Æschylus says that there were 300 ships, and ten were of special swiftness or strength. Mr. Grote thinks that this number is to be accepted in preference, hardly showing, I think, his wonted acuteness. The poet had to state his number in verse, and finds "ten thirties" a convenient way of doing it. But 380 would have been an unmanageable figure, and we have, accordingly, a convenient round number. Very likely Mr. Grote was not so alive to the exigencies of verse as he had been forty years before, when he was a Charterhouse boy.

As soon as the sun rose, the Greek fleet moved forward to the attack, the crews joining, as they advanced, in the *pæan* or shout of battle. They met no reluctant foe. So confident, indeed, was the bearing of the Persians, that the Greeks were checked. Some of the crews even began to back water. The issues of great battles are often decided by examples of courage. So it was at Salamis, for one of the Greek ships advanced and led the way for the rest. To whom this credit is due cannot be said for certain. The Athenians declared that this brave captain was Ameinias, a brother of

the poet Æschylus ; the Æginetans claimed the honour for a ship of their own, which had brought over, on the eve of the battle, the heroes worshipped in their city as auxiliaries of the Greek people.¹ Herodotus had also heard a legend how the form of a woman, doubtless the goddess Athené, had been seen in the air and heard to cry, in a voice which reached from one end of the fleet to another, "Friends, how much further are ye going to back?" Æschylus gives his authority in favour of his countryman, not expressly but by saying that the ship which led the attack broke off the stern of a Phœnician ship, for we know that the Phœnician squadron was posted over against the Athenian contingent. The Æginetan was second if not first, and Simonides gives the third place to a ship that came from Naxos. By common consent Athens and Ægina shared the chief distinction of the day between them. The Athenian ships busied themselves with such of the enemy's fleet as offered resistance or were beached by their captains ; the Æginetans attacked those that attempted to escape by the southern channel (their way to the open sea).

¹ These were Peleus and Phocus, sons of Æacus. Telamon, also a son of Æacus, and Ajax, son of Telamon, were worshipped in Salamis.

The subjects of Xerxes, on the whole, displayed great courage, not the less because they were fighting under the eyes of the king, who was watching the battle from a projecting point of Mount Ægaleos on the mainland of Attica. The native Persians and Medes, as inland peoples, were serving as what we call marines on board the ships furnished by the maritime provinces of Phœnicia, Egypt, and Cilicia. But they seldom had the chance of showing their prowess in boarding, and when they had they were hardly a match for their better-armed and more athletic antagonists. As for the management of the ships, the sailors from the east were not, as a rule, equal, either in resolution or in skill, to the hardier races of the west. Their superior numbers, in the narrow space to which the battle was confined, were a hindrance rather than a help. There was no mutual confidence, and no common speech. And the cogent motive that sent them into action was fear of punishment or, at the best, obedience to a ruling race, while the Greeks were fighting for home and country. The Persian fleet was more successful where the Asiatic Greeks were matched with the squadrons from the Peloponnesus. Herodotus, himself an Asiatic Greek by birth, vindicates their honour

as combatants at the expense of their Greek patriotism. "I could mention," he says, "the names of many captains who took ships from the Greeks." He thinks it prudent, however, to omit them—and indeed when Herodotus wrote, such exploits would be better forgotten—and gives two names only, both of them well known already. He also mentions with pleasure the signal discomfiture of some Phœnician captains, who, having lost their ships early in the day, sought to excuse themselves to Xerxes by laying the blame on the treasonable practices of the Greeks. The battle was still going on, and almost while they were speaking a Samothracian ship was seen to ram and sink an Athenian. It was in turn disabled by an Æginetan trireme. But the Samothracian crew were expert javelin-throwers. They cleared the deck of the Æginetan, boarded, and captured it. Xerxes turned fiercely on the Phœnicians, and ordered that they should be instantly executed, as having ventured to slander men braver than themselves.

Another incident of the day Herodotus relates from personal knowledge. His native city of Halicarnassus had been ruled for some years by Artemisia, the daughter of one

Lygdamis and the widow of another. She had advised Xerxes not to engage the Greek fleet, speaking with a frankness which might well have put her life in danger. Overruled by other counsellors, she did her best for the king's cause, but found herself in the greatest peril. An Athenian ship was in close pursuit of her, and there was a crowd of Persian vessels in front which hindered her escape. One of these belonged to a Carian neighbour, with whom, it is possible, she was not on the best of terms. She bore down upon his vessel, and sank it. The Athenian captain concluded at once that she had changed sides and was now fighting for Greece. He abandoned the pursuit, and Artemisia escaped. And she earned praise as well. "Sire," said one of the courtiers who stood by the king's seat, "dost thou see how bravely Artemisia bears herself? She has just sunk a Greek ship." He was sure, he went on to say, that the exploit was Artemisia's, for he knew her flag. No one seemed to have suspected the truth, and fortunately for Artemisia there was not a single survivor from the Carian ship to tell the tale.

Herodotus gives no estimate of the loss on either side. A later Greek writer says that two hundred Persian and forty Greek ships were

destroyed, and that the Persian loss in men was in a much greater proportion. Few of them could swim, and consequently, when a ship was sunk, the whole crew perished with it. Most of the Greeks, on the contrary, were able to save themselves by swimming. Another disaster to the king's forces was the total destruction of the Persian troops landed on the island of Psyttaleia. Aristides disembarked with some Greek heavy-armed, and put them all to the sword. Among them were some of the king's own guard.

V

THE BATTLES ON THE PLAIN AND ON THE SHORE

AFTER the defeat at Salamis Xerxes withdrew his army into Thessaly. The result of his deliberations with his advisers was that he should himself go home, protected by a division of 60,000 men, and that his uncle Mardonius should stop in Greece with the intention of renewing the campaign in the following year. Mardonius was allowed to choose such portions of the army as he thought best, and having selected 300,000 men, went into winter quarters in Thessaly. It is needless to relate all that happened during the six months or so that passed from the opening of the campaign in the spring of 479 up to the final struggle in the early autumn of that year. It will suffice to say that Mardonius did his best to detach the Athenians from the cause of Greece by the most liberal offers, and that the

Peloponnesians did all they could to bring about the same end by the consistent selfishness of their policy. To Mardonius the Athenians returned a firm refusal. To the Spartans they addressed a strong remonstrance. They represented that they had been already deserted, that the promise of help to be given for the defence of Attica had been shamefully broken. They hinted that if the Spartans and their friends persisted in neglecting every Greek interest outside the Isthmus they would be compelled, much against their will, to make terms with the enemy.

The Spartans would probably have continued to temporise but for the plain speaking of a native of Tegea in Arcadia, a friendly state for which they felt the greatest respect. "No wall at the Isthmus will protect us," he said, "if you drive the Athenians into alliance with Persia. They will put their fleet at the disposal of the enemy, and you will be helpless." The change in the Spartan policy was dramatically sudden. That very night five thousand Spartans set out for the front, a larger force than the state ever before put into the field, or was ever to put afterwards. Each Spartan had seven light-armed helots to attend him. The same number of the non-Spartan population of Laconia,

each with one helot, followed. Mardonius, on hearing of this movement, withdrew from Attica into Bœotia and prepared to give battle.

The contingents of the Peloponnesian States mustered at Corinth. As they marched north, the Athenians, who had crossed over from Salamis, joined them. The whole force amounted to more than 100,000 men. It is not necessary to give all the numbers sent by the various states. The Lacedæmonians had 10,000 heavy armed (with 40,000 light armed), the Tegeans 1,500, the Athenians 8,000 ; the other contingents, for reasons which will shortly appear, may be left out of the account.

Mardonius had constructed an entrenched camp on the north or left bank of the river Asopus. In front of this camp he drew up his line of battle. The Greek army, which was under the command of Pausanias, uncle of one of the kings of Sparta and regent, took up its position on the slopes of Mount Cithæron. Their unwillingness to descend into the plain and come to close quarters emboldened Mardonius to attack them with his cavalry. The contingent from Megara happened to be in a peculiarly advanced or otherwise exposed situation, and suffered so severely that it had to send for help. It explains Pausanias's

apparent timidity when we find that he could not induce any of his troops to go to the assistance of their hard-pressed countrymen. In the end three hundred Athenians volunteered for this service. They took with them a force of archers, an arm in which Megarians were entirely deficient. Some sharp fighting ensued ; at last an arrow killed the horse of the Persian general Masistius, and the general, a man of great stature and beauty, and a splendid figure in his gilded chain-armour, was thrown to the ground. This happened close to the Athenian lines, and Masistius was soon killed, though it was only by a thrust in the eye that he could be despatched, so impenetrable was his armour. The Persian cavalry, as soon as it became aware of its leader's fate, charged furiously to recover the body. For a time the Greeks were driven back, but they rallied and recovered the prize. The Persians, demoralised, in the usual fashion of Asiatics, by the loss of their leader, retreated in disorder.

Encouraged by this success, the Greeks descended into the plain, and took up a second position on the right bank of the Asopus. The Lacedæmonians occupied the right wing, the Athenians the left. A curious instance of the want of discipline in the army is afforded by

the dispute which arose between the Athenians and the Tegeans as to precedence. The first post of honour, the right wing, was conceded by common consent to the Lacedæmonians; the second part, the left wing, was the matter in dispute. Tegea claimed it on account of various mythical exploits, and on more recent successes achieved in company with Sparta. Athens had also its mythical claims, but it relied on the victory at Marathon. The decision was given in favour of Athens by a general vote of the Lacedæmonian soldiery. The new position taken up by the Greeks was found to be anything but convenient. The army suffered from a scarcity of water; it was unsafe to approach the river banks, for this was commanded by the Persian archers, and consequently the sole supply was a spring, known by the name of Gargaphia, which was close to the Lacedæmonian position. Mardonius shifted his line of battle a little to the west, so as to front the new Greek position. His picked native troops, the Persians and the Sacæ (Turkomans) were posted, not in the centre, the post of honour in an Asiatic army, as we have seen more than once before, but on the left wing, where they would face the Spartans; to the Theban contingent was allotted a place

on the right where they were opposed to their old enemies of Athens. This was done at the suggestion of the Theban leaders, and the suggestion did credit, as we shall see, to their sagacity.

For ten days the two armies remained in position without moving. The soothsayers on both sides reported that the sacrifices portended success to a policy of defence; disaster, if an attack should be attempted. It was to the Greek cause that the delay was more perilous. The army suffered greatly from the incessant attacks of the Persian cavalry; the scanty water supply was a great inconvenience and even a danger; and when, at the suggestion of his Theban friends, Mardonius sent his cavalry to cut off the supplies that were sent by the passes of Cithæron into the Greek camp, the dangers of the situation were still further aggravated. But the most serious peril of all was of another kind. The spirit of party, without which no free state can exist, but by which every free state is ultimately ruined, was rife in the Greek ranks. The traitors who had shown the signal of the shield after Marathon were not absent from the ranks at Plataea. The Thebans, with malignant sagacity, suggested to Mardonius that he should rely on

the influences that were working for him, and avoid a general engagement. Happily for Greece, he refused their advice, which was discreditable, he said, to Persian honour. A people so superior in war had no need to resort to such expedients. He resolved to assume the offensive.

The Greeks were apprised of this change of plan by a visitor from the Persian camp. After nightfall, Alexander, King of Macedonia, who claimed to be descended from the great hero Achilles, rode up to the Athenian outposts and demanded speech with the generals. They were fetched by the guard, and he told them that Mardonius had tried in vain to obtain from the sacrifices signs that promised success, but that, nevertheless, he was determined to attack. "Be prepared," he went on, "and if you prevail, do something for my freedom ; I have risked my life for love of Greece, to save you from a surprise by the barbarians. I am Alexander of Macedon."

When Pausanias heard the news he made a proposition to the Athenian generals, which, as coming from a Spartan, a race so punctilious in military honour, sounds very strange. He suggested that they should take the place of the Spartans on the right wing, where they

would be opposed to the Persian infantry whom they had already conquered at Marathon, but whom the Spartans had never met in battle. The Athenians promptly agreed, but the movement was detected by Mardonius, and was met by a corresponding change in his line. On perceiving this, Pausanias reverted to the former arrangement.

The first offensive movement on the part of Mardonius was eminently successful. His cavalry got past, or broke through the Spartan line, so as to get at the spring of Gargaphia. This they choked, and so deprived the Greek army of their only available water supply.

A change of position became necessary. The new ground which the council of war determined to occupy was near Plataea, and went by the name of the Island, because it lay between two small streams which descend from Cithæron. The army would have a water supply, and would be protected, in a degree, from the Persian cavalry. It was then too late to make the movement, which would not be practicable except under cover of darkness. The whole of the next day had to be spent in extreme discomfort ; and when at nightfall orders were given for a change of position, two

somewhat alarming incidents took place. The centre of the Greek force, comprising all the smaller contingents, had been so demoralised, it would seem, by the troubles of the day that, as soon as the night fell, they marched off, not to the Island, but beyond it, to a place which they very probably considered to be better protected against the harassing attacks of the cavalry. This was the town of Plataea itself. They took up a position in front of the temple of Heré, a building of considerable size, as we know from the ruins still to be seen, and on high ground. Here they had the town behind them, and ground, unfavourable to the action of cavalry on either side. The other disconcerting event was the conduct of one of the Spartan officers, Amompharetus by name.¹ This man conceived that the movement ordered by Pausanias was a retreat, and so forbidden by the strict code of Spartan military honour. Accordingly he refused to move. An angry dispute followed, Pausanias and his second in command doing all they could to

¹ He commanded a *lochos*; there were four in each *mora*, the whole force being divided into six *moræ*. The divisions varied in size according to the number of men called out. On this occasion each *mora* would number 830 men (about), and each *lochos* 207 (about).

convince their subordinate, he obstinately adhering to his decision. In the midst of the argument a messenger from the Athenians arrived on horseback. They were perplexed by the inaction of the Spartans, and, very possibly, suspicious of some design which would be compromising to their own safety. At the moment of this messenger's arrival Amompharetus had delivered his ultimatum. Taking up from the ground a huge stone, he cast it at the feet of Pausanias, saying at the same time, "I give my vote for staying"—the same word serves in Greek for vote and pebble, pebbles being used in the ballot-boxes. Pausanias hurriedly explained the situation to the Athenian, and begged him to carry back a message that he hoped his countrymen would not move till he could overcome the difficulty in which he found himself. This, indeed, seemed almost hopeless. At last, just before dawn, Pausanias made up his mind to leave the refractory captain behind. Finding himself alone with his company, he would, he hoped, consent to follow. And this was what actually took place.

By this time day was dawning, and Mardonius became aware of what had happened. He seems to have looked upon the movement

in much the same way as Amompharetus had done. It was a flight. These Spartans, for all their boasted courage, were running away. His Persian troops answered the command by a disorderly advance. They crossed the Asopus, which, it will be remembered, flowed in front of their position, and hurried in the track of the Spartans; the rest of the Asiatics followed their example. Pausanias sent a message to the Athenians, telling them that the Persians were concentrating their whole strength against his division, and begging that they would come to his help, at least by sending their archers. The Athenians, however, had by this time work enough of their own to deal with, for the Thebans and Thesalians had commenced an attack upon them.

The Spartans, therefore, had to bear the brunt of the Persian attack alone. They had ten thousand heavy-armed and four times as many light-armed, numbers slightly increased by the contingent from Tegea, a force of three thousand, equally divided between the two classes of troops. Pausanias, who seems to have shown little ability or presence of mind from the beginning to the end of the campaign, was busy with the customary sacrifice. Unfortunately the victims showed no en-

couraging signs, and he was content, possibly was compelled by the public opinion of his men—for a Greek army, even when it came from Sparta, was a democracy—to postpone any movement of offence till the Fates seemed propitious. Meanwhile his men were falling about him—one of the slain was reputed to be the handsomest man in the whole Greek army.¹ In an agony of distress, Pausanias lifted his eyes to the Temple of Heré, which stood on a conspicuous height, and prayed for the help of the goddess. The signs immediately changed, and the welcome signal to charge was given. The Tegeans seem to have already moved. Together they advanced against the Persian line, which was protected by a rampart of wicker shields, from behind which the archers had been pouring volleys of arrows. The rampart was soon broken down. Then a fierce hand-to-hand fight began. Again and again the

¹ His name was Callicrates, *Fair and strong*, as it might be rendered. There is a class of historical critics who would argue that the name gave rise to the legend, just as they suggest—this has actually been done—that the name of the fleet runner who traversed the distance between Athens and Sparta so speedily, shows the mythical character of the story. It was Pheidippides, *i.e.* Horse-sparer's son.

Persian braves dashed themselves on the Spartans' spears and broke or strived to break them. "They were not one whit inferior to the Greeks in boldness and war-like spirit"—such is the testimony which men who had borne their part in that fierce struggle bore to the bravery of their antagonists—but their armament was less effective and their military training less complete. The battle raged most furiously about the person of Mardonius, who was surrounded by a body-guard of a thousand Immortals. As long as he lived these picked warriors held their own; when he was struck down—a Spartan, Aeimnestus¹ by name, had the credit of the deed—they fled in wild confusion to their camp. A body of forty thousand was led off the field by the general in command, when he saw how the fortune of the day was going.

On the right wing of the Persian army the Theban infantry, always distinguished for its steady courage, held its own for a considerable time against the Athenians. It stood alone, however. The other Greeks, whom Xerxes or his lieutenant had pressed into the Persian service, felt no zeal for the cause, and took the first opportunity that occurred of retreat-

¹ Observe again the significant name—*Ever remembered*.

ing. The Thebans, who must have been much inferior in numbers to their Athenian adversaries, were driven back, with a considerable loss in killed. They took refuge within the walls of their city. Their cavalry, indeed, achieved the only success that the army of Mardonius could boast. News reached the Greek centre, in its position outside Plataea, that the right wing had put the Persians to flight, and it hurriedly advanced to take a share in the victory. The movement was made in a careless and disorderly way. So relaxed was discipline that the whole force did not even keep together. Two of the contingents, from Megara and Phlius (a small state in the north of the Peloponnese) were attacked by the Theban cavalry as they crossed the plain and suffered a very heavy loss, as many as six hundred being slain. "So they perished without honour," says Herodotus. It must be owned that from first to last the smaller Greek States earned little distinction in the war.

The Persian entrenched camp was for a time a difficulty. The Spartans attacked it, but made no progress, being wholly unacquainted with the methods of assaulting fortified places. They had to await the arrival of the Athenians,

who seem to have had, if not more experience, at least more intelligence. With their help the camp was taken by assault. The spoil was very great. Pausanias says that he saw at Athens the golden scymetar of Mardonius, taken from his tent on the day of the victory.

The loss of the Persians was, of course, very great. Herodotus says that only 3,000 survived. This may be an exaggeration, but it is doubtless true that the chances of escape were very small, and that no mercy would be shown. Of the Greeks 159 are said to have fallen. To this number must be added the 600 cut off by the Theban cavalry, and about as many more who fell in the preliminary conflicts. Plutarch, while giving the same number as Herodotus, states that the total Greek loss, from first to last, was 1,360.

Among the Spartan dead were Amompharetus, and Aristodemus, the unhappy survivor of Thermopylæ.

Two of the Greek contingents, from Mantinea and from Elis, arrived after the battle was over. They fined the generals whose tardiness had deprived them of all share in the glory of the victory.

Much might be said of what was done by the conquerors to commemorate their victory ; but

my task is finished when the battle has been described. For one curious story, however, I must find room. Out of the tenth of the spoil dedicated to the Delphian Apollo, a golden tripod, or caldron, supported by three legs, was made. This tripod rested on a bronze pedestal. The gold was plundered by the Phocians about a century and a half later, but the pedestal was carried by the Emperor Constantine to his new capital on the Bosphorus. This relic was seen by English travellers in the seventeenth century, and was more minutely examined at the time of the Crimean war. The original inscription put by Pausanius was erased by the Lacedæmonians, a list of the states that took part in the battle being substituted. Solvents applied to the rust that had accumulated on the metal made this list legible. It contains the names of states which we know to have had no claim to the honour. This exactly agrees with what Herodotus tells us. Systematic falsification of history was carried on by the cities which by their misfortune or their fault took no part in the victory.

The combined Greek fleet did little or nothing after the victory at Salamis. Themistocles proposed, indeed, a vigorous policy. The

Persians should be closely pursued, the bridge across the Hellespont destroyed, and the whole of the invading army destroyed. The Spartans took a different line, urging that Greece would do well to let an enemy, who might still be dangerous, depart without further molestation. This policy had something to be said for it, and Sparta carried the other allies with her. The Asiatic Greeks, however, were not disposed to lose the opportunity of freedom. In the spring of the following year (479) they sent envoys to the leaders of the Greek fleet, which was then stationed at Ægina, begging them to follow up the successes already won. The envoys found their task a very difficult one. The Spartan Leotychides, who was in command, was unwilling to undertake the responsibility. He moved as far eastward as Delos, and there remained. Later in the year another effort was made, this time by three natives of Samos, which was then governed by a tyrant established in power by the Persians. The envoys urged on Leotychides the duty of helping his fellow Greeks to escape from the Persian yoke, and enlarged on the prospects of success. "Stranger," said the Spartan to the spokesman of the embassy, "tell me your name." "Hegisistratus" (army-leader), answered the

man. "I accept the omen," cried Leotychides, and the resolution to advance was taken.

The Greek admirals had expected to find the Persian fleet at Samos. In this they were disappointed. It had left the island, and had taken up a position on the mainland, where it would have the assistance of the army, numbering, we are told, 60,000, which had been left to overawe the Greek cities. The place was *Mycale*, now known as Cape St. Mary. The channel between the mainland and Samos is here at its narrowest. The ships were beached, and protected by a rampart made of stones and timber.

The first thing that Leotychides did, doubtless suggested by the action of Themistocles at Artemisium, was to approach the Greeks serving in the Persian camp. He caused his ship to be brought as close as possible to the shore, and instructed a herald to proclaim, as he moved slowly along, a message to the Greeks. "Men of Ionia," such were the words, "when we join battle with the Persians, remember freedom." They might, he thought, act upon the suggestion, and turn their arms against the Persians. Anyhow, it would cause distrust and suspicion. The latter anticipation was at once fulfilled, The Persians disarmed the Samians, and sent

the contingent from Miletus to a distant spot, which they were to guard, the real object being to get them out of the way. This done they prepared to defend themselves against the Greeks, who were now advancing to the attack.

And now there happened one of the strange events to which we may safely give the neutral name of coincidence. As the Greeks moved forward, a rumour ran from one end of the army to the other that a great battle had been won in Bœotia. At the same time some one saw a herald's staff¹ lying on the shore. The common belief at the time was, of course, in a divine interference. Later on the sceptical explanation that the commanders invented the story to encourage their troops became current. The strange phenomena of thought-currents, brain-waves, etc., familiar to modern experience, will, perhaps, account for the story as satisfactorily as can be expected. Anyhow the report was true; the battle of Plataea had been fought and won in the morning of the day of Mycalé.

¹ The herald's staff (*scutalé*) was a contrivance for sending messages. A strip of leather, on which the message was written lengthwise, was rolled slantwise round a baton. When unrolled it could not be read, but when put on the similar baton in the hands of the officer abroad it again became legible.

The actual conflict was very like that which occurred at Plataea. As we hear no more of the stockade of stone and timber with which the ships were protected, we may presume that the Greeks delivered their attack on the flank of the Persian position. Here a wicker rampart had been extemporised, just as it had been at Plataea. With the help of this the Persians were able for a time to hold their own. Herodotus goes so far as to say that they had not the worst of the battle. But the Athenians, anxious to secure the honours of the day before the Spartans arrived, renewed the attack with fresh vigour, broke down the wicker rampart, and pursued the flying enemy to their fortified camp. For a time, even when the rampart had fallen, the valiant Persians maintained the struggle. Then, overpowered by fresh arrivals, they slowly fell back. The Greek army advanced in two divisions, the Athenians and the contingents brigaded with them marching over the level ground by the sea, the Spartans, with the Peloponnesians generally, taking an inland route which led them over some rough and difficult country. Naturally their progress was not rapid, and the battle was virtually decided when they reached the field of action.

To the very last the Persians showed all the

courage and pluck of a ruling race. The Greek victory was by no means bloodless. The contingent from Sicyon, in particular, lost heavily. The result of the day, however, was definite enough. Some survivors from the battle contrived to escape to the hills, and thence to Sardis, but the army, as a whole, ceased to exist. The ships were naturally abandoned. Perhaps this was the most important of the Greek successes, for it meant the liberation of the islands of the *Ægean*. These were finally rescued from the yoke which had been heavy on them for half a century.

BOOK II

GREECE AND CARTHAGE

I. THE LORD OF SYRACUSE

IN the early part of the year 480, when the danger from Persia was imminent, the Greeks sent an embassy to their countrymen in Sicily, asking for help. The Greek power in the island was largely in the hands of one man, Gelo, tyrant of Syracuse. To him, therefore, the application was made. Herodotus gives an account of the interview, professing to report the speeches which were made at it. These may be epitomised thus :—

AMBASSADORS : “ The Persian King is bringing against us the strength of Asia. He professes to be seeking vengeance on Athens ; really, he is bent on subduing the

whole Greek race. If he should conquer us he will certainly attack you. Join with us therefore in resisting him. Combined, we shall be a match for him ; disunited, we shall certainly be conquered."

GELO : " When I asked you for help against Carthage you would not give it. For anything that you did to stop it, Sicily might have been conquered by the barbarians. But I will return good for evil. You shall have two hundred ships of war, twenty thousand men-at-arms, two thousand cavalry, as many more light-armed troops, and corn for your whole army as long as the war lasts. Only you must give me the chief command."

SYAGRUS (the Spartan ambassador) : " What would King Agamemnon say if he heard that Sparta had given up her leadership to a man of Syracuse? Know that we will not have your help upon such terms."

GELO : " It seems but fair that I who send so large a force should have the command. Still, if you are so stiff about the leadership, I will say—' Command the army, and let me have the fleet ; or, if you like it better, take the fleet and give me the army.' "

THE ATHENIAN AMBASSADOR (*interrupting before any one else could speak*) : " The com-

mand of the fleet is ours. We will yield it, indeed, to the Spartans, if they desire it, but we will yield it to no one else."

GELO: "Friends, you seem not to want for commanders, though you want for men. As you ask everything and yield nothing, go back to Greece and say that she has lost the spring out of the year."

There is nothing improbable about this dialogue. Questions of precedence and leadership were regarded with great jealousy by States that were actually independent of each other and nominally equal. The strange thing is that Gelo makes no mention of the danger with which he was himself threatened. He brings up against the ambassadors the fact that the States which they represented had given him no help in conflict with Carthage (an incident of which we know nothing from any other source), but he does not mention what was undoubtedly the case that he was at the moment expecting another attack from the same quarter. It would have been quite impossible for Gelo to send fifty thousand troops—not to speak of the crews of the ships—out of Sicily, when he was certain to want every man that he could raise in the course of a few months.

The truth is that there was another Asiatic

power which was scarcely less formidable to European civilisation than Persia itself. I speak of Carthage. Though locally situated in North Africa as an Asiatic power, she was Phœnician in origin, character, and institutions. Founded by emigrants from Tyre some time in the ninth century B.C., she had always kept up a close connection with her mother-country of Phœnicia. One of the traditions of the race was to regard the Greeks as rivals or as enemies. Sicily, where Greeks began to settle in the eighth century, just about the time when Carthage was beginning to expand, and which, at its nearest point, was not more than a hundred miles from that city, naturally became a battlefield between the two races. Phœnician traders had been in the habit of visiting the island long before the Greeks appeared upon the scene, and though they seem to have given up most of their scattered ports and factories, they continued to occupy three towns in the western division. Carthage therefore would find kinsfolk and friends when she sought to gain a foothold in Sicily. When this attempt was first made we do not know. The early history of the city is a blank. About 550 B.C. we hear of one of its leaders making conquests in Sicily, among other places. That

there was a great effort to conquer the island in 480 we cannot doubt. Probably it was the result of an agreement with Persia. There is, it is true, no evidence forthcoming of any compact of the kind; but it is not likely that there would be such evidence. On the other hand, the Persian king may very easily have come to an arrangement with the Carthaginian government through Phœnician intermediaries. The Phœnician contingent was the largest in his fleet, and was high in his favour, at least until the disastrous defeat of Salamis.¹ The coincidence of time is, in itself, a strong argument for the existence of a common plan.

One of the many Hamilcars who figure in Carthaginian history was put in command of an army which is said to have numbered 300,000 men. It was made up of Phœnicians, probably recruited in Carthage itself, and in various settlements of that race along the Mediterranean coast, of Africans from the home provinces, of natives of Sardinia, Corsica, and the Italian mainland, and, finally, of Spaniards, for Spain was by this time within the sphere of Carthaginian influence. Hamilcar landed at Panormus and marched to Himera, which lay some twenty miles to the westward

¹ See p. 41.

on the northern coast of the island. Some of his large fleet of transports, especially such as carried the cavalry and the war-chariots, were lost on the way, or lagged behind. Still the army, as a whole, was successfully transferred to Sicilian soil, and Hasdrubal, convinced that if this could be done his force would be practically irresistible, is reported to have said: "The war is over." He had, we must remember, another good reason for confidence. There was a powerful minority among the Greek cities which was prepared to welcome the interference of Carthage. Hamilcar had been actually invited by the banished tyrant of Himera. Unfortunately, any enemy of a Greek city could expect to find helpers within its walls in an unsuccessful party. Eager political life did much for the development of Greek character, but a heavy price had sometimes to be paid for its benefits. Hamilcar divided his force between two camps. One of them was for the crews of the fleet, which had all been beached with the exception of twenty swift vessels kept for an emergency; the other was occupied by the army. Himera, on the other hand, prepared for a desperate resistance. Even the gates were bricked up. The garrison was under the command of

Theron, tyrant of Agrigentum. His first step was to send off a messenger to Gelo with an urgent appeal for help. Gelo was ready to march. He had under his command fifty thousand infantry and five thousand horse. He reached Himera, and strongly fortified a camp outside the city. He had, as has been said, a strong force of cavalry, an arm in which the Carthaginians were deficient owing to the accident to the horse transports. This superiority he used to cut off the enemy's foraging parties. His success in these operations was so great as to raise the spirits of his troops. The inhabitants of Himera grew so confident that they pulled down the brickwork with which, as has been said, they had blocked up their gates.

The decisive battle was not long delayed. We have no details of the tactics employed on either side, but we are told that the contest was long and bloody, lasting from sunrise almost to sunset. A daring stratagem seems to have done something towards deciding the issue of the battle. Gelo had intercepted a letter from the magistrates of the Greek city of Selinus to Hasdrubal, in which there was a promise that they would send a force of cavalry to his help. He intended some of his own horsemen to play the part of the cavalry of Selinus. They were

to make their way into the enemy's camp and then take the opportunity of doing all the mischief they could. A concerted signal was to apprise the commander-in-chief of their success. On seeing he would press the attack with all possible vigour. This he did, and the result was the complete defeat of the Carthaginians.

So far there is nothing improbable about the story. When we are told that one-half of the invading army fell on the field of battle we recognise one of the familiar exaggerations of ancient history. It is probable that the real number, both of the combatants and of the slain, was much smaller than that commonly received. However this may be, Carthage certainly suffered a disaster of the first magnitude. Her army ceased to exist; some of the fugitives probably made good their escape to the Phœnician strongholds in the island, but many were compelled to surrender to the conquerors. Some, doubtless, were ransomed by their friends at home; the rest were sold as slaves.

So fine an opportunity of pointing a moral and adorning a tale was not likely to be lost by the Greek writers. The story in the shape which it ultimately took was this: As both of the Carthaginian camps were captured by Gelo,

the fleet met with the same fate as the army. But the squadron of twenty ships which had been reserved for emergencies made good its escape. But even these were not fated to reach the African shore. A storm overtook them on their voyage and all perished. One little boat, rowed by a single survivor, survived to carry the story of how the most splendid armament ever sent forth from Carthage had ceased to exist. Exactly the same story was told of the return of Xerxes after the defeat of Salamis. According to Herodotus, who had every opportunity of knowing the truth, the Persian king made his way back overland, losing many men on the way from hunger and disease, but unmolested. So tame a conclusion did not satisfy the Greek sense of the fitness of things. Tradition pictured the Persian king as making his escape after the battle in a single ship; and Juvenal, when he was seeking illustrations for the great theme of the vanity of human wishes, found the legend admirably suited to his purpose. Xerxes had lashed the winds and put the sea in fetters when they hindered his triumphal march. But how did he return?—

“ In one poor ship the baffled monarch fled
O’er crimsoned seas and billows clogged with dead.”

The fate of Hamilcar himself was wrapped in romantic mystery. Some said that he was slain by one of the horsemen who made their way into the camp; according to others he destroyed himself. While the conflict was raging he remained in the camp, occupied in soliciting the favour of the gods by costly sacrifices. He was not content to offer the victims in the usual way, by pieces taken from this or that part. They were thrown whole into the fire, which was built high in order to consume them. When he found that his devotion was unavailing and that the tide of battle was turning against him, he threw himself into the furnace. Certain it is that he was never again seen alive. Gelo erected a monument to him on the field of battle, and the Carthaginians paid to his memory yearly honours of sacrifice. There must have been some greatness in the man which was thus recognised by the conqueror, and by the city which had, one would think, no reason to be grateful to him.

II

THE STORM FROM AFRICA

THOUGH the Carthaginians, for some reasons which we do not understand, commemorated Hamilcar on the field of Himera, they did their best at home to banish all recollection of his disastrous expedition. They even sent his son, Gisco, into exile for no reason except his unfortunate parentage. Gisco took up his abode in the Greek city of Selinus. A Greek city was not likely to be an agreeable home for a stranger not of Hellenic blood. The Greek's pride of race was intense; all the outside world was barbarian to him. Anyhow, one of Gisco's children, Hannibal by name, carried away from the place where his youth was spent an intense dislike of the race. "He was by nature," says Diodorus, "a Greek-hater." The guilt of his race had been expiated, it would seem, by his father's

lifelong exile, and he had been permitted to return home, and had even risen to the highest office in the State.

An opportunity now came to him for gratifying the animosity which he felt against the city of Selinus. This seems to have been in a state of chronic enmity with its neighbour Egesta. The quarrel between them had already led to the most disastrous consequences. It was the complaint of Egesta against their neighbours of Selinus that had given Athens a pretext for their Sicilian expedition. Only two years had passed since this expedition had come to an end, disastrous beyond all precedent in Greek history, and now this paltry quarrel was about to cause another devastating war. Egesta was, of course, worse off than when she made her unlucky application to Athens and was hard pressed by her Greek neighbours. She now sent envoys to Carthage. Hannibal, as I have said, saw his opportunity. He persuaded his countrymen to take up the cause of the weaker State. The first thing was to send envoys to Sicily with instructions so to manage the affair as to make an appeal to arms certain.

They were to go to Syracuse in company with a deputation from Egesta, lay the affair

before that State, and offer to submit to arbitration. It was pretty certain that Selinus would refuse its consent, for it was practically in possession of the territory which was the matter in dispute. This, indeed, was exactly what happened. Selinus represented its case before the Syracusan assembly, but refused arbitration. Syracuse, accordingly, resolved to stand neutral, to maintain its alliance with Selinus, and to remain at peace with Carthage. Selinus, left to itself, failed to understand the danger in which it was placed. Five thousand Africans and eight hundred mercenaries from Italy, veterans who had served with the Athenians in the siege of Syracuse, but had left them or been discharged before the final catastrophe, came to the help of Egesta. The Selinuntines took no heed of their arrival, but continued to ravage the enemy's territory. As they met with no opposition, they grew more and more careless. But the enemy was on the watch, and taking the invading force by surprise inflicted on them a heavy loss, killing or taking prisoners as many as one thousand men.

Even now Selinus, it is possible, might have escaped her doom. My readers will remember that the State had been on friendly terms with

Carthage, and had actually sent, or at least promised, help to Hamilcar when he was attacking Himera.¹ Had it asked for peace and appealed to these associations in support of the petition, Hannibal might not improbably have granted tolerable terms. His great quarrel was not against Selinus, but against Himera. It was at Himera that his grandfather had perished, and it was his grandfather's death that he desired above all things to avenge. But the Selinuntines appear to have been totally insensible of their danger. They asked for help from Syracuse, should the need arise, and received a promise that it would be given. But nothing was actually done.

The fact is that no one in the island was aware of the vast preparations which Hannibal was making for an expedition in the following year. We are not told how the secret was kept ; but kept it was. When the storm burst on the Sicilian Greeks it took them by surprise, and it came with overpowering force.

The numbers given by historians are, as usual, various and untrustworthy.² One writer

¹ See p. 71.

² It may be as well to explain that our knowledge of this period is derived chiefly from Diodorus Siculus, a writer of the first century of our era. He was a native of Sicily, and

gives 100,000, and this we may take as approximating to the truth. The army was made up as usual of mercenaries, commanded, as far at least as the superior officers were concerned, by native Carthaginians. The city was now at the very height of its prosperity and could command a practically unlimited supply of men from the fighting races of the world. Africans, Spaniards, and Italians made up the force, with a mixture of Greeks, always ready to sell their swords to any paymaster. This great army was carried across the sea in fifteen hundred transports, and were landed in the bay of Motyé, not far from Lilybæum, the western extremity of the island. Selinus is on the southern coast of the island, but Hannibal preferred to disembark his troops at some distance. Had he sailed any distance along the southern coast his advance might have been regarded as a menace to Syracuse and

while writing something like an Universal History, gave special attention to the affairs of his own country. He had before him, it would appear, two writers of much earlier date, both of them Sicilians. These were Ephorus, who was born about 404 B.C., and Timæus, who was about half a century later. Fragments only of their works survive, but practically all that Diodorus tells us about Sicilian affairs comes from them. Some details we get from Plutarch.

the other Greek cities. His sagacity served him well. Syracuse, whether informed of what had happened or not, made no movement. Hannibal, on the other hand, lost no time, but marched straight to Selinus, his forces being increased by contingents from Egesta and the Carthaginian settlements. The walls of the town were ill-adapted to resist the attack of an army far outnumbering the force available for defence and amply furnished with everything that the engineers of the time could put at the disposal of a besieging force. Powerful catapults discharged showers of missiles which cleared the walls ; archers and slingers were posted at points of advantage where they could serve with the best effect the same purpose ; wooden towers, filled with armed men, were brought up to the walls, with which they were very nearly on a level ; elsewhere huge battering-rams were driven against such spots in the fortifications as showed any signs of weakness or decay. Every one of these methods of attack was made formidable in the extreme by the multitudes of men available for pushing them home. And Hannibal was present everywhere, urging on his soldiers with an almost fanatical energy. The siege lasted for nine days, the besiegers pressing the

assault with unabated energy, the besieged maintaining the defence with all the resolution of despair. There was no thought of capitulation. Indeed, the Carthaginian general would grant no terms. He had promised the plunder of the town to his soldiers, and Selinus had no other prospect than to resist or to perish.

Assault after assault was delivered and repulsed. But it was a conflict that could not be indefinitely continued. The combatants in the place could hardly have exceeded ten thousand; probably their number, even when swelled by every one who could hold a weapon, was under this figure. And they had all to be on service, with the very briefest intervals of rest, or with no intervals at all. The assailants came on by relays, of which there were so many that no one had to fight for more than three or four hours at a time. On the third or fourth day a body of Campanian mercenaries found their way into the town over a breach that had been made by the battering-rams. But Selinus was not yet taken. The townsmen gathered themselves up for a supreme effort, and the Campanians were driven out with the loss of many of their number. On the tenth day a Spanish force—the Spaniards

were always the most resolute fighters in the armies of Carthage—made their way into the town. This time the wearied citizens could not drive the storming party back. Yet they still resisted. Barricades were set up and desperately defended in the narrow streets, while the women and children showered tiles and bricks from the roofs and upper stories on the enemy below. A last stand was made in the market-place. Thus most of those who still survived were slain. Some fell alive into the hands of the enemy; two or three thousand made good their escape to Agrigentum.

And all the while not a single soldier from any one of the Greek cities of Sicily came to help the unhappy town. Messenger after messenger had been sent to tell how pressing was the need, and to implore assistance, but no assistance was given. Agrigentum and Gela had indeed their forces ready to march, but they waited for Syracuse, and Syracuse was culpably tardy in moving. Possibly, as had been suggested, its rulers fancied that Hannibal would waste time as they had lately seen Nicias, the Athenian commander, waste it before their walls. Anyhow, they waited first till a petty quarrel with two of their Greek neighbours was finished, and then till the

very largest and best equipped force that could be raised was ready to march. By this time the opportunity was lost. With horror, not unmixed with a certain fear for its own future, Syracuse heard that Selinus, a Dorian Greek city, like itself, had fallen.

The fall of a city taken by storm has always been miserable in the extreme. In whatever respects the world may have advanced and improved, in this it remains much about the same. But the Carthaginians seem to have used their victory with more than common barbarity. That the prisoners should be slaughtered in cold blood was unhappily a common incident. A Greek conqueror was more likely than not to treat fellow Greeks in this way. But mutilation was a hideous barbarity, and in this Hannibal permitted his soldiers to indulge. I mention the fact because it helps us to realise how the world would have been put backward if Carthage had triumphed over Greece. Selinus was again inhabited, but it never recovered the terrible blow inflicted upon it by Hannibal. To this day the prostrate columns of its temples, some of the most magnificent ruins in the world, bear the marks of the crowbars which the barbarous invaders used in overthrowing them.

The main purpose of Hannibal was still to be accomplished. It was against Himera, the scene of his grandfather's defeat, that his expedition was really aimed, and, Selinus destroyed, he marched against the other city, which was on the north coast of the island, and about fifty miles distant. His numbers were swollen by recruits from the native Sicilian tribes, who had never reconciled themselves to the presence of the Greek settlers, and now gladly seized the opportunity of expelling them. Hannibal repeated at Himera the tactics which he had employed with success at Selinus. He delivered his attack without any delay, bringing his battering-rams to bear upon the walls, and bringing up his movable towers. Nothing was accomplished on the first day. The people of Himera had the help and, what was probably not less effective, the encouragement of a Syracusan contingent of 4,000 men. Repeated assaults of the besiegers were repulsed with great slaughter, and the spirits of the defenders rose high. So great indeed was the confidence which they felt in their superiority to the enemy that they resolved to take the offensive. At dawn on the second day a body of 10,000 men sallied forth from the town and fiercely attacked the investing force. The Carthaginians were

not prepared for any such action. Their first line was easily broken. The Greeks pursued the fugitives and inflicted upon them a heavy loss, killing, it is said by one writer, as many as 20,000 men. As this number would allow an average of two victims to each combatant, it may safely be rejected. The 6,000 given by a more sober historian is probably much nearer, though not under the number. But the easy success of the sally led to disaster. Hannibal was watching the affair from some elevated ground in the rear of the position, and he now moved forward. He found the Greeks exhausted and breathless, and after a fierce struggle drove them back. The main body reached the gates of Himera, though not without loss, but 3,000 men were isolated on the plain and perished to a man.

While the struggle was proceeding, a squadron of twenty-five ships of war arrived from Syracuse. Unfortunately they brought with them some alarming news. In passing the Carthaginian port of Motyé they had observed signs of preparation in the fleet. The explanation suggested and received was that the enemy were preparing to attack Syracuse. The captain of the Syracusan contingent, Diocles by name, was profoundly

alarmed by this intelligence. The defence of Himera became a secondary consideration in view of what he believed to be the instant danger of Syracuse itself. He ordered the warships to return immediately. He even insisted on taking back the troops under his own command. The Himeræans remonstrated against this desertion, but remonstrated in vain. It could hardly be denied that Diocles was acting in the interest, at least in the immediate interest, of Syracuse. All that he would agree to, in the way of compromise, was that the ships should transport as many of the Himeræans as could be taken on board to Messina, which was about 150 miles distant (Syracuse was 100 miles further off), and that they should return with all speed to take away the remainder. Those who were left behind, or elected to remain, should do their best in the meantime to hold the city. As for Diocles, he marched away in such haste that he left the bodies of such of his own men as had fallen in the recent conflict unburied—the most shameful confession that a Greek general could make of weakness or defeat. The next day Hannibal renewed the attack. The brave Himeræans still repulsed him. For the whole of that day they were able to hold their own.

If they could have maintained their resistance for yet another twelve hours, all might have been well, for the ships, which clearly could not have gone so far as Messina, were seen to be returning. But their strength was exhausted. A breach had been made in the walls, and the Spaniards, again showing their superiority over Hannibal's other troops, forced their way through it. A few of the Himeræans made their way to the ships ; but the great mass of the population was either slain or captured. Hannibal, while giving up the spoil of the city without reserve to his soldiers, did his best to stop the massacre. But there was no mercy in his motives. The women and children were either distributed among the conquerors or sold as slaves. The male captives of full age, 3,000 in number, were taken to the precise spot where Hamilcar had been last seen alive, cruelly mutilated and slain. We read of many barbarous acts in Greek history, but of nothing so atrocious as this. If we can see but little trace of humanity, as we understand it, in the Greek character, the people had a sense of fitness, a restraining power of taste, if not of conscience, that forbade such horrors.

The danger that threatened civilisation must

have seemed great at the time, though it was probably less than had been the case when the fate of the world, so to speak, had been in suspense on the day of Salamis. But the fears of Sicily, felt also, we may believe, in mainland Greece, were suddenly relieved. Hannibal had accomplished his object. He had exacted a never-to-be-forgotten vengeance for the death of his grandfather, and he wanted no more. Half Sicily was now in the hands of Carthage, and the Greek name was more humbled than it had been within the memory of man. He disbanded his army, and returned, laden with the spoils of war, to Carthage, where he was received with enthusiasm.

But the danger was only postponed. If Hannibal had been satisfied with the results of his campaign, Carthage was not. Its old ambition of dominating Sicily was revived, and for the next four years it made costly and incessant preparations for another invasion of the eastern or Greek portion of the island. Unfortunately the Sicilian Greeks spent the time, not in consolidating their strength, but in intestine strife. The most eminent citizen of Syracuse had made repeated attempts to establish a despotism. He had met with failure and death, but he left behind him a

legacy of political hatred that might well have proved fatal to the State.

In 407 the hostile intention of Carthage became known to the Sicilian Greeks. They sent envoys to make a remonstrance, and to suggest a treaty of peace. No answer was given, and the preparations went on with unabated zeal.

In the following year the expedition sailed. Hannibal was again in command, but he shared his power with a young kinsman, Himilco by name. His force, on the most moderate computation, amounted to 120,000 men, with a fleet of 120 ships of war. It was in Agrigentum, to which the frontier of Greek Sicily had now been pushed back, that the storm was first to fall.

Agrigentum was a splendid city, second only to Syracuse in population, and not yielding even to it in magnificence and wealth. No city in the island or even in mainland Greece, Athens only excepted, could boast more stately temples and public buildings. Surrounded by a large and fertile territory, it carried on a profitable trade with the African coast. It could boast of one kind of wealth in which few Greek cities could vie with it—a noble breed of horses, which were seen at least as

often in the front at the chariot-races of Olympia as the teams sent from Syracuse or Argos. Only two years before the time of which I am speaking an Agrigentine citizen had won the prize for four-horse chariots, and on his return home had been escorted from the frontier by three hundred private chariots each drawn by two white horses.

Agrigentum was built on a site naturally strong and had been skilfully fortified. It occupied a group, or rather part of a group, of hills which on all sides but one, the south-western, rose precipitously from the plain, so precipitously indeed that attack was impossible. On the north-east, crowning the height of the most lofty hill, was the citadel, approachable by one narrow path only.

While the fortifications were strong and well cared for, they were also adequately garrisoned. Besides a numerous force raised from her own citizens Agrigentum had in her pay eight hundred Campanian mercenaries, who three years before had served under Hannibal, and had thrown up their engagement dissatisfied with their pay. She had also secured the services of fifteen hundred other mercenaries who were under the command of Dexippus, a Spartan soldier of fortune. The citizens

were confident in their ability to repel any attack that might be made on them. When Hannibal proposed a treaty of alliance, which, however, would permit Agrigentum to stand neutral in the approaching conflict, it was promptly rejected.

For a while all went well with the defence. Hannibal assaulted the town at the only point where an assault was possible, but accomplished nothing. He even lost his siege train, for the Agrigentines made a sally, captured, and burnt it. He then adopted the alternative plan of constructing a mound which would put the assailants on a level with the walls. The cemetery of Agrigentum was situated outside the walls in the same quarter as that which was the scene of the attack. Indeed, it was only here that there was any level space. Massive tombs of stone, in which reposed the remains of distinguished or wealthy Agrigentines of past days, abounded, and Hannibal, with the national carelessness of all religions other than his own, determined to make use of these materials for his siege work. His workmen had destroyed many of the tombs, and were busy with the most splendid of them all, that of Theron (tyrant of Agrigentum from 488 to 472) when a thunderbolt fell on the spot. This was

regarded by the Carthaginians as a manifest token of the divine displeasure. The panic which followed largely increased the fatalities from a disease which now appeared in the camp. Thousands perished, Hannibal himself being one of the victims. It was not till various expiations, one of them a human sacrifice, had been made that Himilco, who now succeeded to the chief command, was able to resume the operations of the siege.

But fortune still seemed to favour the Greek cause. The other Greek cities had been actively employed in raising a relieving force. A Syracusan army, made up by contingents from Gela and Camarina to 30,000 foot and 5,000 horse, reached the Agrigentine territory. Himilco despatched a force of Spaniards and Italians to contest their further advance. After a fierce fight the Carthaginian mercenaries were broken, and compelled to retreat to their camp. Daphnæus of Syracuse, who was in chief command, possibly recollecting the disastrous result of the too vigorous pursuit of the enemy before Selinus, held back his men when they would have followed up the victory. The officers in command at Agrigentum were equally cautious. Their troops were eager to sally out from the gates and fall upon the

flying mercenaries as they hurried past in disorder, but the generals absolutely refused their permission, and the opportunity of completely destroying the enemy—so at least the malcontents contended—was lost.

The allies now entered the town amidst general rejoicing. It was not long, however, before a discordant note was heard. Loud complaints were made of the supineness of the Agrigentine generals in allowing the enemy to escape. Some went so far as to suggest that a treasonable understanding existed between the Agrigentine generals and Himilco. A public assembly was hurriedly convened, and the accused generals were put upon their trials. The leader of the contingent from Camarina, Menes by name, ranged himself with the accusers. What evidence was brought against the generals we do not know. It is quite possible that there was nothing worthy of the name, for a Southern mob was ready then, as, indeed, it is now, to take its wildest guesses as truth. Anyhow their defence, whatever it was, availed nothing. Four out of the five were stoned to death, the fifth was allowed to escape in consideration of his youth. At the same time the Spartan Dexippus was severely censured.

This deplorable affair bears a curious resemblance to a well-known incident in Athenian history, which indeed almost coincided with it in time : the execution of the Athenian generals after the victory at Arginusæ, on the charge of having neglected to do all that was possible in saving the lives of the shipwrecked crews. It shows, as any one who tells the story of Greece has many occasions of showing, the dark side of free political life. For the time, however, no ill result seemed to follow, as far as the war was concerned. The tide of fortune still ran strongly against the invading army. Himilco had practically to raise the siege of Agrigentum, and was besieged in his own camp. This was too strongly fortified to be taken by assault, but it seemed in danger of being reduced by famine. Daphnæus was strong enough to cut off the supplies, and the Carthaginians were reduced to the greatest straits. Some of the mercenaries mutinied, and were with difficulty pacified by having handed over to them the plate which the wealthy Carthaginians who held high command in the army had brought with them. Then by a bold *coup* Himilco effected a total change in the situation. Agrigentum was mainly supplied from Syracuse, and towards the

end of the year a fleet of transports carrying stores was on its way under the escort of some Syracusan ships-of-war. The Carthaginian fleet had been inactive since the beginning of the campaign, and the Greek commanders seem to have thought that it might safely be neglected. In this they were soon undeceived. A squadron of forty ships-of-war issued unexpectedly from Motyé, attacked the escorting ships, of which they destroyed eight, driving the rest ashore, and succeeded in capturing the whole of the convoy. The positions of the two armies were now reversed. The Carthaginians were possessed of abundance of supplies; the Greeks were threatened with famine. The mercenaries in the service of Dexippus approached him with a complaint. He was unable to satisfy them, and they marched away to Messana, alleging that the time for which they had been engaged was expired. The alarm caused by this desertion was great, and Dexippus took no pains to allay it. He had not forgotten the fate of the Agrigentine generals or the censure passed upon himself. The magistrates of Agrigentum instituted an inquiry into the condition and amount of the supplies still remaining in the city, and found that very little was left. They lost no time

in deciding on a course of action. Agrigentum must be evacuated, and that at once. That very night all the population, except the sick and helpless, and a few patriots who preferred dying in their native city to leaving it, hurriedly fled to Gela, their rear being guarded by the Syracusan and Agrigentine troops. They escaped with their lives and with such property as they were able to carry off. Those that remained behind were slaughtered without mercy, unless they preferred to put an end to their own lives. Some had hoped to find safety in the temples, but the Carthaginians showed no respect for the sacred places of the city, which they plundered and destroyed as remorselessly as they did the secular.

But the tide of Carthaginian success had not yet reached its height. Two more Greek cities, Gela and Camarina, had to be evacuated. Practically Syracuse and Messana alone remained. If this success had been attained in 480 the prospect of European civilisation would have been dark indeed. Happily by this time Persia, Carthage's natural ally, had ceased to be formidable.

It would demand too much time, and would take me too far from my proper subject, if I were to relate in detail the history of the war.

It can hardly be doubted that there had been much mismanagement on the part of the Syracusan generals. But all the mistakes which they made might have been repaired without serious loss to the State and to the welfare of the Greek race in Sicily, if it had not been for the unscrupulous ambition of a Syracusan citizen. A short time before the Carthaginian invasion there had been attempts on the part of one of the leaders of the aristocracy of Syracuse to make himself an absolute ruler. He perished in the enterprise, but his plan did not die with him. A certain Dionysius, who had married the daughter of the deceased man, now saw in the popular indignation against the incompetent generals an opportunity of securing his own ends. He brought about their condemnation, and procured his own election in their place. A crafty manœuvre enabled him to surround himself with a body-guard. In the end he made himself master of the city. Ostensibly he was the chief citizen of the republic. The coins of Syracuse still bore the figure of the personified city, for Dionysius did not venture to put his own likeness upon them. But practically he was absolute. So far the success of the Carthaginian invasion had helped him. He would never

have risen to supreme power had it not been for the terrible disasters which had overtaken Agrigentum, Camarina, and Gela, and had seemed to make him a necessary person. But he felt, of course, that Syracuse must not fall. Fortunately for his plans, he found that Himilco was not in a position to carry the war further. The Carthaginian army, loosely constituted of mercenaries gathered from many countries, had fallen into a disorganised condition. The sickness that had worked such havoc during the siege of Agrigentum had broken out again, and had claimed thousands of victims. Without much difficulty an agreement was arrived at. The Carthaginians were to keep all their former possessions and their recent acquisitions. Only Gela and Camarina might be reoccupied by their former inhabitants, on the condition of paying tribute. And—for here was the important article of the treaty—*Syracuse was to be subject to Dionysius*. Peace was concluded on these terms, and the Carthaginian army returned home, carrying back with it, we are told, the terrible disease which had wrought so much damage in Sicily.

III

DIONYSIUS THE TYRANT

WE may feel pretty certain that neither of the two parties to the treaty which brought the war of 407-6 to an end had any intention of keeping it longer than it might suit his or their convenience. Dionysius had skilfully used the war to raise himself to despotic power; Carthage probably expected that once again, as so often before, the internal quarrels of the Greek people might give her the opportunity of some fresh aggrandisement. She had accomplished much in a few years, though not without severe losses. But these losses, after all, counted but for little. The blood of mercenaries was cheap. As long as the city's sources of income were untouched, she could reckon with certainty on gathering as many recruits from Africa, Spain, Italy, and the shores of the western Mediterranean as she might choose to pay for. She had therefore no

small reason to believe that her long-cherished scheme of subjugating Sicily might be accomplished at no distant date.

Peace lasted for some eight years—years which Dionysius utilised to consolidate his power at home, and to extend his dominions abroad. He felt acutely the reproach levelled against him by his enemies that his power rested on Carthaginian support, and was anxious to remove it. In 397 he felt himself strong enough to act, and taking the people into his counsel, for he was careful to observe the forms of constitutional government, proposed to commence hostilities. No declaration of war was made, but the property of Carthaginian residents in Syracuse was given up to plunder, and the trading vessels in the harbour were seized as prizes. If Carthaginian wealth excited the cupidity of their Greek neighbours, so their oppressive rule and brutal manners were the objects of universal hatred. As soon as the news of what had been done in Syracuse with the consent, and, indeed, at the suggestion of, Dionysius spread through the Island, it was followed by a general massacre of the Carthaginian inhabitants. In all the cities which the late campaigns had left in a dependent or tributary condition there was a rising of the

population against their Carthaginian masters, and a massacre followed not unlike that which was planned and partially carried out amongst the Danes of East Anglia on St. Brice's Day, 1006, A.D., or that which is known as the Sicilian Vespers in 1282. In a very short time the region actually held by Carthage in the Island did not extend beyond her strongholds on the western coast.

Dionysius followed up these proceedings by an *ultimatum*. Carthage might have peace if she would renounce her dominion over all the Greek cities ; failing this, she must prepare for war. To such a demand there could be but one answer. Dionysius did not even wait for the inevitable negative, but marched with the whole military strength of the Island—never probably gathered in such strength or with such unanimity before—against the stronghold of Motyé. The Carthaginians resisted with an obstinacy which is characteristic of the Semitic race. One line of defence after another was stoutly maintained. When the walls had to be given up, the streets were barricaded. In this kind of fighting the Greeks lost heavily. At last a stratagem which is not without parallel in modern warfare proved effective. For some days in succession the assailants ceased fighting

at sunset, the signal for recall being sounded on a trumpet. This came to be expected by the townspeople, who began to relax their watchfulness. But Dionysius prepared a picked force which was to make a night attack. This was done before the Motyans were aware of what had happened, and the town was taken. A massacre followed in which many were destroyed, though Dionysius did his best to stop it. He was certainly not specially humane, but he did not approve of the useless destruction of what, in the shape of slaves, might be valuable property. It is to be noted that the Greeks respected the lives of those who fled to the temples for protection. It shows them to have been on a somewhat higher plane of feeling than were the Carthaginians. The temples, it must be remembered, were those of Punic gods.

Carthage had no intention of allowing these attacks to pass without retaliation. A large force, amounting at the lowest estimate to 100,000 men, was levied in Africa and landed in Sicily, where it received an accession of another 30,000. Himilco, who had commanded in the last campaign, was made general-in-chief. He conceived a novel and bold plan of campaign. He marched to north-eastern Sicily,

a part of the Island which up to that time had been exempt from attack. Messina was his objective point, and Messina was almost helpless. It had walls, indeed, but these were in repair so bad that they were useless for any real defence. And then a considerable part of the army was with Dionysius and the Syracusans. What was left boldly confronted the enemy in the field. Himilco did not offer them battle, but embarking a considerable force in the ships which moved along the coast as the enemy advanced, made a direct attack on the town. He calculated that the ships would outstrip the Messanian army, and he proved to be right. The Carthaginians found the place almost deserted, and simply poured into the town by the gaps in the walls. The forts he could not take. Some of the inhabitants were slain in a hopeless attempt to hold the town ; some attempted the desperate expedient of swimming across the Strait of Scylla and Charybdis, whose terrors were not so formidable as the ferocity of the Carthaginians—out of two hundred swimmers fifty got safe to the Italian side. Messina gained, Himilco marched on Syracuse, intending to take Catana on his way. The army was to follow the line of the seashore ; the fleet was to keep on a level with it. At

Ætna a diversion had to be made. The volcano was in action, and the streams of lava that flowed down the eastern slope compelled the army to make a *détour* to the west. Dionysius thought he saw his opportunity in this division of the invading force. He put both his army and his fleet in motion, and proceeded to meet the enemy. Only the fleets, however, came into collision, and the result was a serious defeat of the Syracusans. The admiral, Leptines by name, had been strictly enjoined to be cautious ; to keep his fleet in close order, and on no account to break the line. This tactic did not suit him. He attacked the enemy with a squadron of thirty quick-moving ships, at first with brilliant success. Then what the more prudent Dionysius had feared came to pass. Leptines could not hold his own against the overpowering numbers of the enemy. After some hours of fighting he had to make his escape with what ships were left to him. He had lost a hundred ships and, it was said, as many as twenty thousand men.

Dionysius had watched the disaster from the shore without being able to give any help to his comrades. The question what he was himself to do became urgent, His bolder counsellors urged him to give battle to Himilco.

He was half disposed to follow their advice, but the risk seemed too great. It would be to hazard everything on one throw of the dice. He retreated on Syracuse, and took shelter within the walls. Himilco promptly followed. His army, said to have numbered 300,000, and certainly large, was easily able to invest the city on the landward side; his fleet filled the Great Harbour, though this had an area of nearly four square miles. The Syracusan army did not dare to leave the shelter of their walls; the fleet was glad to be protected by the defences of the Inner Harbour, a refuge which had never yet been entered by a foe. Never had the Greek race in Sicily been reduced to straits so desperate. Only one city remained to it, and this closely invested. Syracuse was like Jerusalem as Isaiah describes her in the height of the Assyrian invasion, "a cottage in a vineyard, a lodge in a garden of cucumbers."

Then the tide began to turn. The Syracusans obtained some successes at sea. Some corn ships carrying supplies to the Carthaginian camp were captured, and a squadron of men-of-war which attempted to recover them defeated with a loss of more than half its number, including the admiral's ship.

Then pestilence, an attack of bubonic plague if we are to judge from the description given of it, broke out in the camp. It was aggravated by religious terrors. Himilco had shown himself as careless about sacred things as his predecessor in command. He had broken down tombs to use their materials, and had plundered temples, one of them of especial sanctity, the shrine of Persephone, Queen of Hell, and her mother Demeter (the Ceres of Roman mythology). Thousands of men perished—the historians, dealing, as usual, in enormous figures, say one hundred and fifty thousand. The mortality was certainly great, and Dionysius did not fail to use his opportunity. He delivered simultaneous attacks by land and sea, and was successful in both. The fleet was nearly destroyed. Many ships were captured; many more were burnt. Part of the camp was taken. Dionysius took up his quarters at the close of the day near the temple of Zeus, in which Himilco had had his headquarters that very morning.

The Carthaginian general then opened secret negotiations with his antagonist. To tell the story in a few words, he purchased the safety of himself and the native Carthaginian officers in the army by a bribe of three hundred talents.

The money went into the private coffers of Dionysius, and Himilco was allowed to escape with his countrymen, though some of the forty ships filled with the fugitives were captured. The Syracusan admiral, of course, knew nothing about the arrangement, and Dionysius, while he contrived to postpone, could not absolutely forbid pursuit. The mercenaries thus left to their fate had various fortunes. Dionysius took some of them into his own service; the native Sicilians contrived, for the most part, to escape unmolested to their own homes. A considerable number surrendered, and were sold as slaves. Himilco reached Carthage in safety, but could not endure the humiliating position in which he found himself. He blocked up the doors of his house, refused admittance to friends and kinsmen, even to his own children, and died by voluntary starvation.

Whether Carthage would have made any attempt to recover what had been lost, we cannot say. The events that followed made it impossible. Her African subjects revolted from her; her allies deserted her. For a few weeks she stood as much alone as Syracuse had stood a few weeks before. But the combination against her was not one that could

hold together long. It soon began to fall to pieces, Carthage helping the process by heavily bribing the leaders. But her power was crippled for a time, and she had to be content with withdrawing her boundary line in Sicily to its old place in the western portion of the Island.

It would be tedious to follow in detail the wars of the next few years. War followed war; sometimes one party triumphed, sometimes another. We have just seen Carthage reduced again to the narrow limits within which she had been confined before 409. Then, twelve years afterwards (383), Dionysius is compelled, after a disastrous defeat at Cronium, at which he is said to have lost 14,000 men, to concede nearly half of the Island. In 368 again—our knowledge of these campaigns is sadly broken and confused—there is another change of fortune, a brilliant victory of Dionysius, followed, however, by a reverse, which had the effect of leaving things very much as they had been when the campaign began.

In 367 Dionysius died, after a reign of thirty-eight years. I am not concerned now with his character as a domestic ruler. In this respect his name is proverbial for a cruel tyranny, amply punished by the torturing

suspensions with which the life of the tyrant was harassed. But it is impossible to deny his great merits as a soldier. He had faults, but he certainly supported the Greek cause in Sicily against the incessant attacks of a very powerful enemy. We shall see how much his abilities were missed when his power passed into the hands of a feebler successor.

IV

THE DELIVERER FROM CORINTH

THE younger Dionysius was indeed wholly unequal to the position into which he was thrust by the accident of birth. He was entirely inexperienced in government, for his father had jealously excluded him from all share in public affairs, and he had little capacity for learning the art of rule when he found himself under the necessity of practising it. Some ability he had, but it was not in the direction of politics. In this direction he seems to have had few ideas beyond securing his own safety and getting as much enjoyment as possible out of the opportunities of power. The history of his reign may be told in a very few words. He held the power inherited from his father during a period of fourteen years. Then he was expelled from Syracuse, but contrived to establish himself at Locri, with

which city he was connected through his mother. After the lapse of ten years he regained possession of Syracuse. But his power was not secure, and he could not spare any thought or energy for the general interests of the Island. The other Sicilian cities were no better off. Carthage, of course, made use of the opportunity thus given, and steadily increased her power. The situation became so threatening in 344 that some Syracusan exiles bethought them of invoking the aid of Corinth, their mother city. Corinth acceded to their request, but rather by way of permission than of giving active help. No expedition was sent by the State. But a general was nominated and appointed at a public assembly ; Corinthian citizens were allowed to volunteer for service. Finally seven ships were sent by the State, two being added to this number by Corcyra, another Corinthian colony, and one by Leucadia, also Corinthian in origin. But the greater part of the force that was raised were mercenaries. Something must be said about the general, who was one of the most remarkable figures in Greek history.

Timoleon was a noble citizen of Corinth who had saved the liberties of his country by a terrible sacrifice. His elder brother Timo-

phanes, an able and unscrupulous soldier, had established himself as a despot by help of a band of mercenaries who had been hired for the protection of the city against the threatened danger of Athenian invasion. Timoleon remonstrated with him, but in vain. Then he resolved to free his country at any cost. He communicated his intention to two, one account says three, friends. They went together and asked for an interview with Timophanes. Timoleon addressed another appeal to his brother, and was contemptuously repulsed. His companions then drew their swords, for, thanks to their introducer, they had been permitted to enter the tyrant's presence with arms, and put Timophanes to death. Timoleon took no part in the deed, but stood apart, his face covered with his mantle and weeping bitterly. The act met with enthusiastic approval from the great majority of Corinthian citizens. Some who had looked for some personal gain from the favour of the despot, and in their hearts regretted his death, pretended to be shocked by the way in which it had been brought about. To Timoleon himself the event was the cause of the deepest and most permanent sorrow. He shut himself up in his house, took no part in public affairs, and

refused the visits of his friends. The arrival of the Syracusan exiles delivered him from this miserable existence. At the Assembly held for the appointment of a general, name after name had been proposed in vain. The internal dissensions of Syracuse were so notorious at Corinth that no one was willing to undertake the thankless task of intervening in its affairs. Unexpectedly some one in the Assembly—it was thought at the time by a divine inspiration—proposed the name of Timoleon. It was received with general acclamation, and Timoleon thankfully accepted the post. He contrived to elude the Carthaginian squadron which was sent to watch him, and reached Sicily. Some four years were spent in restoring order and freedom in the Greek cities. For some reason with which we are not acquainted, Carthage did not interfere with him whilst so engaged. War is said to have been precipitated by a violation of the Carthaginian territory. That it would certainly have broken out sooner or later may safely be affirmed.

Carthage evidently made a great effort to bring the war to a successful issue. She seems to have been aware that circumstances were unusually favourable, for the Greek cities

of Sicily had never before been in so deplorable a condition of weakness. It was, indeed, a happy thing for the cause of freedom that so exceptionally able a man as Timoleon had the conduct of affairs. The army landed at Lilybæum, under the command of Hasdrubal and Hamilcar, numbered 70,000. Of these, not less than 10,000 were native Carthaginians. Carthage was always sparing of the blood of her own citizens, preferring to buy even at lavish prices the valour and skill which she needed. On this occasion she raised an unprecedentedly large native force. They were equipped, too, in the most costly fashion. Each soldier was clothed in complete armour, much heavier and, therefore, more impenetrable than that usually worn. Each, too, had an elaborately ornamented breastplate. A *corps d'élite*, numbering 2,500, was the nucleus of the force. A fleet of two hundred ships of war accompanied the army, whose needs were supplied by a vast multitude of nearly a thousand transports. One important item in the war material was a number of chariots. The personal effects of the Carthaginian soldiers, many of whom belonged to the wealthiest families in the city, splendid tents and rich goblets and other plate for the table, were costly in the extreme.

Timoleon could not raise more than 12,000 men. He had 3,000 Syracusan citizens, an unknown number, possibly about 6,000, of volunteers from other Greek cities, and a force of mercenaries. His cavalry numbered one thousand. But he could not keep with him even the whole of these. When he had nearly reached the border of the Carthaginian territory there was a mutiny among the mercenaries. Their pay was considerably in arrears, and one of their officers took advantage of this fact to rouse them against the commander-in-chief. "He is taking you," he said, "on a desperate errand. You will have to encounter an enemy who can match every one of our soldiers with six of his own. And he does not even pay you your wages." Never did the strong personality of Timoleon show itself to more advantage. The mutineers got, in a way, all they wanted. They were sent back to Syracuse with instructions to the authorities at home that they were to be paid off at once, whatever it might cost to raise the money.¹ This concession seemed to put a

¹ It is difficult not to feel a certain satisfaction at knowing that the mutineers came to a bad end. They had a disreputable record, for they had taken the pay of the Phocians, knowing that it had been provided out of

premium on mutiny. Nevertheless, Timoleon by his personal influence succeeded in checking the movement. The troops that were left, when the discontented element was removed, followed him with unabated loyalty and courage. Marching westward into the heart of the Carthaginian territory, he reached the stream known as the Crimessus.¹ If he had before to contend against the avarice of his soldiers, he had now to deal with their fears. The army was encountered by some mules carrying loads of parsley. The men were dismayed at what they took as an unlucky omen, for parsley was commonly used for the garlands that are placed on tombs. Timoleon was equal to the occasion. "With this," he cried, seizing a sprig of the

the sacred treasures of the temple at Delphi. On receiving their arrears they sailed to Southern Italy, where they attempted to form a settlement, were entrapped by the native inhabitants, and perished to a man.

¹ It is uncertain where this stream is to be located. Some geographers (Sir E. Bunbury among them, in the "Dictionary of Classical Geography") suppose it to be a little river that flows into the sea near Castellamare; by others it is identified with one that has its mouth on the south coast of the island, a few miles to the east of Selinus. This is the view taken by the author of the map recently published by Mr. John Murray, where the name is given to one of the upper tributaries of the Hypsas, now known as the Belici.

herb, "we crown our conquerors in the Isthmian Games at home. It is our symbol of victory," and he put a chaplet on his own head and adorned his officers in the same way. The Greek army had now reached the brow of the hill which forms the eastern bank of the valley of the Crimessus. The whole country was covered with a mist, but there came up from the valley beneath a confused sound as of a great host in motion. Suddenly the mist lifted, and Timoleon saw below him the great Carthaginian army. The war-chariots had already crossed the river and were drawn up on the eastern shore; the Carthaginian infantry, in their splendid armour, were in the very act of the passage; pressing on their rear in a disorderly crowd was a multitude of mercenaries and native African levies. Timoleon saw his opportunity, and promptly seized it. He could never have so good a chance of delivering a successful attack on the enemy as when they were thus divided, some being actually in the river and some on the further shore. After a brief exhortation to his men, he led them down the steep slope to the river. The cavalry went first, and charged the native Carthaginians, who were just struggling out of the river and forming themselves in line on the

bank. But for a time they charged in vain. Indeed, they had to do their best to save themselves from being broken up, for the chariots were driven furiously backwards and forwards among them. They could hardly keep their own lines; on the lines of the enemy they made no impression. Timoleon then changed his plan. Recalling the cavalry, he sent it to operate on the flank of the enemy, while he proceeded to lead his infantry to a front attack. He took his shield from the attendant that carried it, and bade his men follow him. "He shouted to the infantry to be of good cheer and follow him," says Plutarch, "in a voice much louder than was his natural wont. It may have been the excitement of the conflict that lent it such a power, but the common belief at the time was "that something divine was speaking through him." The work that they had to do required no little enthusiasm of courage. The Carthaginians were stout soldiers and splendidly armed. The spear availed little against them; the Greeks had to get under their guard and assail them with the sword. At this critical point of the battle something happened which convinced Timoleon's soldiers that their leader had powers more than mortal on his side.



TIMOLEON HOLDING THE FORD OF THE CRIMESSUS.

The mist that had cleared away from the valley, and risen to the hilltop, now seemed to descend again in a furious storm. Besides the sound and sight of the thunder and the lightning—and there were but few spirits in that day hardy enough to despise these terrors—there was a blinding storm of rain and hail driven fiercely by a tempestuous wind into the faces of the Carthaginians. To the Greeks, who had it behind them, it caused little inconvenience. And then the river began to rise. The Carthaginians began to stagger under the weight of their heavy armour and saturated clothing, and when once a man had fallen there was no hope of his rising again. It was not long before the four hundred picked soldiers who formed the front ranks were cut down. These champions gone, the rest broke up and attempted to flee. This was almost impossible. Many were slain in the attempt; many others were drowned; and there were thousands of prisoners. Never before had such a blow fallen on Carthage. She lost, not as usual, the mercenaries whom it was easy to replace as long as her wealth held out, but her noblest sons. On the other hand, the Greeks, besides winning a very complete victory, gathered a spoil more magnificent

than the most experienced campaigner had ever seen.

Timoleon had not yet finished his work. He had still to put down the despots whose thrones were propped up by the power of Carthage, and Carthage was not inclined to give up her position in Sicily. In the course of the next year, however, the despots were all destroyed, and Carthage was glad to conclude a peace. By this she bound herself to keep to the western side of the Halycus (*Platani*) and not to interfere with the internal affairs of the Greek cities.

It is needless to continue in detail the story of the conflict between Greece and Carthage. The result was practically fixed by the victory of Timoleon at the Crimessus. Carthage did not indeed altogether abandon her ambition. She still coveted Sicily, still hoped, it may be, to acquire it, and came, once at least, as near to attaining to this end as she had ever done before. In 309 B.C. Syracuse had again lost the freedom which Timoleon had given back to her, and had fallen under the domination of one of the ablest and most unscrupulous in the long list of Sicilian tyrants, Agathocles. This man provoked a war with Carthage, but found himself unequal to his antagonist, and after a

series of defeats was shut up in Syracuse. This city was, as it had been eighty-odd years before, the only place in the Island which the Greeks could call their own. Then Agathocles conceived a daring scheme. He would transfer the war to Africa, and attack Carthage at home, where, as he shrewdly perceived, her weakest points were to be found. An invader could always reckon upon the sympathy and support of the subject races, which suffered from the exacting rule of the Carthaginian government. Agathocles carried out his plan, and for a time achieved a brilliant success. He afterwards met with reverses, but his main object, the rescue of Sicily, was fully achieved.

Agathocles died in 289 B.C. Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, famous for the victories which he won over Rome, was the next to take up the part of the leader of the Sicilian Greeks in their long struggle with Carthage. He accomplished little. In fact he spent two years only in the Island. The most memorable incident of his stay was that Carthage offered him alliance on most advantageous terms, and that he refused it unless she would agree to evacuate the Island. This was an honourable action, for the offer would have given him a most important advan-

tage in the renewed attack upon Rome which he was planning. But the Sicilian Greeks showed little gratitude for his self-denial; in fact, they became so hostile that he had no alternative left him but to leave the Island. "How fair a wrestling-ring," he is reported to have said as he took his last look of Sicily, "are we leaving to Rome and Carthage!" With this departure of Pyrrhus, Greece, we may say, disappears from the scene, and Rome takes her part. Pyrrhus left Sicily in 276, and Rome came for the first time into collision with Carthage twelve years afterwards in what is called the First Punic War. These wars will be the subject of my Fourth Book.

BOOK III

GREECE AND PERSIA. THE ATTACK

I. THE FIGHT ON THE RIVER

ALL danger to Greece from Persian attack, so far as the mainland and the islands in the Ægean were concerned, practically ceased with the victory of Mycalé. But the Greek cities in Asia Minor were not safe. In the years 466–5 B.C. Cimon, son of Miltiades, the hero of Marathon, conducted operations in South-Western Asia Minor, which had for their object the expulsion of the Persians from certain Greek settlements in that region. In 450 a formal convention was made which brought to an end, it may be said, the first act of the drama. The great king bound himself to leave the Asiatic Greeks free and untaxed, and not to send troops within a certain distance of the coast; Athens, on the other hand,

agreed to leave Persia in undisturbed possession of Cyprus (though this island had a large Greek population) and of Egypt.

The next period was one in which the relations of Persia and Greece were largely determined by the exigencies of Greek politics. The two great rivals for supremacy, Athens and Sparta, found Persian help, especially in the shape of gold, very useful ; and Persia, for her own purposes, played off the two against each other. There is an amusing scene in Aristophanes which illustrates this state of affairs. A pretended Persian envoy is introduced to the Assembly. He wears a mask which is made of one big eye, in token that he is the King's Eye, and mutters some gibberish which his introducer interprets as a promise to send some gold. The scene goes on :—

“Tell them about the gold ; speak louder and more plainly.”

The Eye spoke again : “ Gapey Greeks, gold a fooly jest.”

“ That is plain enough,” cried a man in the Assembly.

Ambassador. “ Well, what do you make of it ? ”

Citizen. “ Why, that it is a foolish jest for us Greeks to think that we shall get any gold.”

Amb. "You're quite wrong. He didn't say 'jest' but 'chest.' We are to get *chests* of gold."

Cit. (turning to the *Eye*). "Now listen to me; is the king going to send us any gold?"

Eye shakes his head.

Cit. "Are the ambassadors cheating us?"

Eye nods.

Cit. "Well, anyhow the creature knows how to nod in the right way."

This humiliating state of things reached its worst in 387 B.C., when what was called the Peace of Antalcidas was concluded between Persia and Sparta. It is enough to quote one clause from the treaty, which, it should be said, all the Greek States agreed to accept,

"King Artaxerxes thinks it just that the cities in Asia and the islands of Clazomenæ and Cyprus should belong to him. He thinks it just also to have all the other Hellenic cities autonomous, both small and great, except Lemnos, Imbros, and Scyros, which are to belong to Athens as they originally did. Should any parties refuse to accept this peace, I will make war upon them, along with those of the same mind, by land as well as by sea, with ships and with money."

It looked as if all that had been won at

Marathon and Salamis had been lost, and Persia had become the arbiter of the fate of Greece. The Asiatic Greeks did lose what had been gained for them, for they fell again under the power of Persia. But these evils worked, in a way, their own cure. The States which had abused their power for selfish purposes fell, one after another, into the background, and others, which had not exhausted themselves in futile struggles for supremacy, came to the front. One of the claims which these new representatives of Greek feeling put forward was the resolve to exact vengeance—for this was the common form which the idea took—for the wrongs which Persia had done to Greece. At the same time there had been various revelations of the real weakness of the gigantic Empire which stretched from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean. The Expedition of the Ten Thousand, though it had failed of its immediate object of dethroning one prince in favour of another, had shown the immense superiority of the Greek race over its ancient enemy. Ten thousand men had marched into the very heart of Persia without meeting with a check, and had made their way back again under circumstances of almost incredible difficulty, without suffering anything like disaster.

Jason, tyrant of Pheræ in Thessaly (*d.* 370 B.C.) was the first, as far as we know, to form a definite scheme for the invasion of Persia. Thessaly I have had occasion but once only to mention. This was in describing the battle of Plataea, when some cavalry from this region did good service to the Persians. It is strange to find in it the first advocate of what we may call the anti-Persian Crusade. But Jason had not the means to carry out so important a scheme. Anyhow, his career was cut short by assassination.

About a quarter of a century later we find the idea further developed. Its exponent is now the greatest rhetorician of the time, and the champion whose services are invoked is Philip of Macedon. About 346 B.C. Isocrates addressed a letter to Philip, who had recently been made president of the Amphictyonic Council, suggesting to him that he should reconcile the Greek States to each other and with their help wage war against Persia. The counsel was not offered, we may be sure, without a previous assurance that it would be welcome to the prince to whom it was given. Philip certainly cherished some such purpose. This was the ultimate object which he set

before himself in his struggle for supremacy in Greece. He even went so far as to make definite preparations for the enterprise. It may well be doubted whether he had genius enough for so gigantic an enterprise. It was not put to the test. His career also was cut short by the sword of the assassin. He was slain in 336 B.C., in the forty-seventh year of his age. Able as he was, he left a still abler successor the inheritance of his preparations and his plans.

Alexander, who at his father's death was not quite twenty, had first to consolidate his position. He began by crushing his barbarous neighbours in the north ; he then stamped out a rebellion in Greece. This done he turned his attention to preparing his great plan. All was ready in less than two years.

In April, 334, Alexander crossed the Hellespont into Asia. He had about 35,000 men with him, one-seventh being cavalry. Marching slowly eastwards, he came, a few weeks later (May 25th), on the Persian army, which was encamped on the eastern bank of the Granicus, a small stream which flows down from the Ida range into the Sea of Marmora. Of the Persian strength differing accounts are

given. The total probably exceeded that of Alexander's army. The proportion of cavalry to infantry was certainly much larger. The front line, indeed, which held the bank of the river, consisted wholly of this arm. On the right were the Medes and Bactrians, wearing the national dress, a round-topped cap, gaily-coloured tunic, and scale armour. In the centre, similarly accoutred, were the Paphlagonians and Hyrcanians; on the right was a small body of Greek horse, and the Persian cavalry proper, largely made up of men who claimed descent from the Seven Deliverers, the little company of nobles who delivered Persia from the sway of the false Smerdis.¹ Here Memnon, the Rhodian, the ablest counsellor of King Darius, was in command. The infantry, both Asiatic and Greek, was posted in reserve, on the rising ground which

¹ Cambyes, in a fit of frantic jealousy—so the story ran—had put his brother Smerdis to death. Cambyes died in Egypt. The magi, Median soothsayers and priests, contrived that one of their number should personate the murdered prince. After he had occupied the Persian throne for a few months, seven nobles conspired against him and slew him. One of the seven, Darius, became king; the others were rewarded by perpetual immunity from taxes, for themselves and their descendants, and other privileges.

marked the limit of the winter floods. The river was now flowing within its banks, but with a full, strong stream.

Alexander, who was mounted on his famous charger Bucephalus, rode along the line, addressing a few words of encouragement to each squadron and company as he passed it, and finally placed himself at the head of the right division of the army. As soon as the Persian leaders perceived his intention, they began to reinforce their own left. The fame of the king's personal prowess had not failed to reach them, and they knew that the fiercest struggle would be where he might be in immediate command. Alexander saw the movement and the opportunity which it offered him. He would have his antagonists at a disadvantage if he could catch them in the confusion of a change. Accordingly he ordered the whole line to advance, the right division being thrown somewhat forward. Here was a famous *corps d'élite*, a heavy cavalry regiment that went under the name of the "Royal Companions." This was the first to enter the river. A number of javelin-throwers and archers, on either side, covered their advance; they were supported by some light horse and a regiment of light infantry.

The van of the attacking force made its way across the stream in fair order. The river-bed was rough, full of great stones brought down by floods and with here and there a dangerous deep hole, but there was no mud or treacherous sand. The first assault was checked. A line of dismounted troopers stood in the water, wherever it was shallow enough to allow it; on the bank itself was a mass of horsemen, two or three files deep. The combatants below plied their swords; those on the higher ground showered javelins on the advancing foe. Only a few of these could struggle up the somewhat steep bank; of the few some were slain, others thrust back upon the troops that followed them. The attack seemed to have failed. But when the king himself took up the attack the fortunes of the day were rapidly changed. For the first of many times throughout his marvellous career the personal courage of Alexander, his strength, his dexterity in arms, turned the tide of battle. He was a matchless soldier as well as a matchless general, and seemed to combine the old soldiership and the new, the personal prowess of an Achilles and the tactical skill of an Epaminondas. He sprang forward, rallying, as he advanced, his disheartened troops, struck

down adversary after adversary, and climbed the bank with astonishing agility. The example of such a leader seemed to give the Companions an irresistible strength. In a few minutes the bank of the Granicus was won. But the battle was not yet over. The Persians had been beaten back from their first line of defence ; but they still held the level ground, and till the whole of the Greek army had crossed the stream they had a great superiority in numbers, enabling them to deliver charges which the weight of men and horses might well have made irresistible. Again Alexander was in the thick of the conflict. His pike had been broken in the struggle for the bank. He asked his orderly for another. The man showed him his own broken weapon. Then the king looked round to his followers, holding high the splintered shaft. The appeal was answered in an instant. It was a Corinthian, Demaratus by name, who answered his call and supplied him with a fresh lance. It was not done a moment too soon. The Persian cavalry charged in a heavy column, its leader, Mithradates, son-in-law to King Darius, riding a long way in front of his men. Alexander spurred his horse, charged at Mithradates with levelled pike, struck him in the face, and hurled

him dying to the ground. Meanwhile another Persian noble had ridden up. He struck a fierce blow at Alexander with his scymetar, but missing his aim in his excitement, did nothing more than shear off the crest of the helmet. Alexander replied with a thrust which broke through his breastplate and inflicted a mortal wound. There was a third antagonist behind, but his arm was severed by a sword-cut from a Macedonian officer just as he was in the act of delivering a blow. The struggle, however, was continued with unabated fury. It was not till almost every leader had fallen that the Persian cavalry gave way.

Elsewhere in the field the victory was more easily won. The *élite* of the Persian army had been brought together to oppose Alexander, and the remainder did not hold their ground with equal tenacity. When the phalanx had made its way across the river, and reformed itself again on the eastern bank, it encountered no opposition.

There still remained, however, a force to be dealt with which, had it been properly handled, might have been found a serious difficulty for the conquerors. The infantry, as has been said, was posted in reserve, and of this force not less than a half, numbering as many as ten

thousand, consisted of Greek mercenaries. These had remained in absolute inaction, idly watching the struggle on the level ground below. They had no responsible leaders; no orders had been issued to them. The Persian generals, confident in the strength of their special arm, the cavalry, neglected to make any use of this invaluable force. And yet they might have known what ten thousand Greeks, well led, could do! Alexander came up and charged the unprotected flank of the Greek force. "He had the defects of his virtues," and was too eager in "drinking the delight of battle." His charger—not the famous Bucephalus, which had fallen lame, but another horse—was killed under him. The light infantry also delivered an attack, but the mercenaries still held their ground. But when the phalanx came up, their strength or their courage failed. The front ranks were crushed by the advance of the ponderous machine, and the rest first wavered, then broke up in hopeless confusion. Not less than half of their number were killed in their places or in the attempt to escape. The rest were either admitted to quarter, or contrived to make their way to some place of safety.

II

THE IRRESISTIBLE PHALANX

THE eighteen months that followed the battle of the Granicus Alexander spent in Asia Minor. A few strong places resisted him, but on the whole he met with little opposition. On the other hand, he did not move very quickly. At Gordium, in Phrygia, he gave his army a long rest, and at Tarsus, in Cilicia, he was detained against his will by a severe illness, contracted, it was said, by bathing in the ice-cold waters of the Cydnus. Meanwhile Darius had been gathering together from all parts of the Empire a vast army which would be sure, he thought, to crush the invader. So confident did he feel that he did not attempt to check Alexander's advance. He left the strong passes into Cilicia undefended. He did the same with the passes from Cilicia into Syria. He desired nothing better than that

the enemy should come to close quarters with him. His original plan was to wait for the Macedonian army at a place named Sochi, where there was a great expanse of level ground. Then he began to fear that Alexander might after all escape him. He left Sochi, and marched by one of the passes of Mons Amanus (Sáwur Dagħ) to Issus, where he would be in the rear of the enemy, and so be able to cut off the retreat which he believed would be attempted. Alexander, who had in the highest degree the faculty of guessing what his antagonist was thinking, saw his advantage. At Issus, Darius could not make use of his numbers, and so might be attacked with good hope of success. He made a night march, recrossed into Cilicia, and fought at Issus the second of his great battles.

Darius took up his position on the north bank of the River Pinarus (*Deli Tschai*). The centre of his line of battle was composed of 90,000 heavy-armed infantry, drawn up in three bodies of 30,000 each. One of these consisted of Greek mercenaries, and occupied the middle place; on either side were the other two—Asiatics armed in Greek fashion. His own place was behind the Greeks. It was in them that he really trusted, though he had violently

resented the suggestion when it was made by another. Some weeks before, when reviewing the army with which he was about to encounter Alexander, he had asked for the opinion of Charidemus, an Athenian exile, who was in attendance on him. Charidemus was bidden to speak his mind freely, and he was imprudent enough to take the king at his word. The substance of his advice to the king was not to trust Asiatics, but to spend his accumulated treasure in hiring Greeks. Darius was deeply offended, and the great nobles about him were furious with rage. Charidemus was put to death, but his advice must have been followed. The cavalry was massed on the right wing—that end of the line which was nearest to the sea, for there alone was there any ground suitable for their action. On the left wing, reaching far up the mountain-side, were twenty thousand light-armed infantry, who were to throw themselves on the flank of the Macedonians as soon as these should attempt to cross the river. Behind this line of battle, numbering, it is probable, not less than 120,000 men, stood a mixed multitude, swept together from all the provinces of the vast Persian Empire. This mass of combatants, if combatants they can be called, already unwieldy, received the addition of

50,000 troops, who had been posted on the southern bank of the river to cover the operation of forming the Persian line, and who were brought back when the formation was completed. The ground had been over-crowded before, and this addition to the numbers of the second line only made it more hopelessly unmanageable.

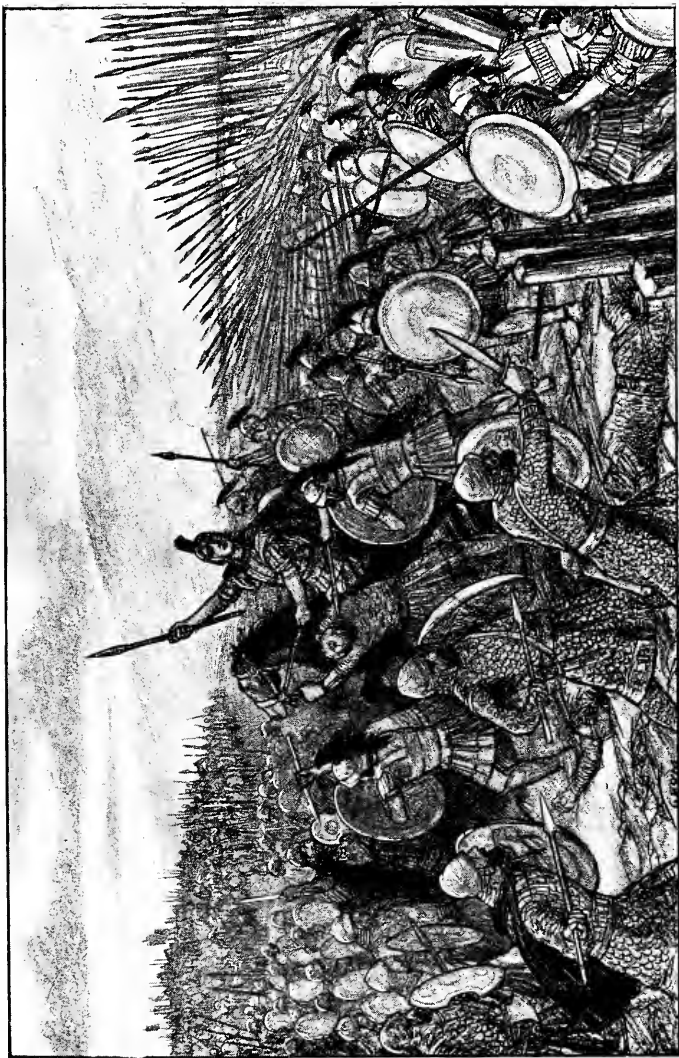
Alexander put his light infantry on the extreme right of his line, opposite, it will be remembered, to a similar force in the Persian array. Here also was the cavalry regiment of the "Companions," and with them some Thesalian horse. The main line was composed of the phalanx in five divisions, the fifth, on the extreme left, being close to the sea, which was little more than a mile and a half from the foot of the mountains—so narrow was the space which Darius had chosen for a battlefield. He could have done nothing better calculated to destroy any advantage that might have been given by his vast superiority in numbers. On the left were some squadrons of Greek cavalry, and bodies of light-armed troops from Crete and Thrace.

On coming in sight of the enemy Alexander made some changes in the disposition of his forces. The most important of these was to

transfer some light infantry, cavalry, and archers to act against the 20,000 Persians who had been so placed as to threaten his right flank. It was a wise precaution, but, as a matter of fact, it was not needed. The Persians made no move, and Alexander soon perceived that they might be safely neglected. He left a few hundred cavalry to watch them, and placed the rest of the force destined for this service in his main line.

A brief time was allowed for rest when the river was reached. It was well, too, to wait for a possible forward movement on the part of the Persians. The confidence that had prompted the march to Issus might also prompt an attack. But the Persian line remained in its place, and Alexander crossed the stream. He had with him his light infantry, not slingers and archers, it should be explained, but regular soldiers, with armour and weapons so modified as to enable them to move quickly, the "Companions," and two divisions of the phalanx. The phalanx was drawn up in companies each sixteen deep. All the soldiers were armed with a pike (*sarissa*), which was twenty-one feet in length. The pikes of the front rank projected fifteen feet, the other end being weighted so that the weapon could be held

without difficulty. The pikes of the second rank projected twelve feet, of the third, nine, of the fourth, six, of the fifth, three. The other ranks held their pikes in a slanting direction over the shoulders of those who stood in front. Alexander led the attack, as usual, in person. The Macedonians, moving as quickly as the phalanx could go, fell upon the Asiatic heavy-armed, who occupied the left division of the main Persian line. They were mainly Carduchi, the Kurds of to-day, better hands, it would seem, then as now, at plundering than at fighting. The Carduchi gave way, not waiting for the Macedonians to come to close quarters with them. Their flight endangered the safety of the king, or, rather, the king himself believed that it was endangered. He bade his charioteer turn the horses' heads and fly. As long as the ground allowed he kept to the chariot; when it became too rough he sprang upon a horse, and fled in such haste that he threw away his royal mantle, his bow, and his shield. The mixed multitude that stood behind the main line of Persian battle, as soon as they saw the king quit the field, fled, or, rather, attempted to fly. But, so narrow was the space in which they had been crowded together, they could scarcely move. A scene of frightful terror and



THE BATTLE OF ISSUS.

confusion followed. The fugitives struggled fiercely with each other in the frantic attempt to escape. Had they shown as much energy in resisting the enemy as in thrusting aside and trampling down their friends, they might have changed the fortune of the day. In less than half an hour from the time when Alexander crossed the Pinarus the left wing of the Persian host was a hopeless mass of confusion.

Yet the Persians had a still unbroken strength with which much might have been done, if only there had been a leader to make use of it. The Greeks in the centre stood their ground bravely. They even advanced, charged the left divisions of the phalanx, which had not completed the passage of the Pinarus, and inflicted some loss upon it, killing as many as 150 of the front rank men, and the officer in command. But by themselves they could not hope to hold the field. When Alexander, wheeling round after his victorious assault on the Persian right, attacked them in flank, they were forced to give way. But they retired in good order, and the main body of them made good their escape. The Persian cavalry, too, had shown themselves not altogether unworthy of their ancient renown. They had actually

crossed the Pinarus, and charged the Thes-
salian horse, which had been transferred, it
should be said, by Alexander from the right
to the left of his army. In the combat that
ensued they held their own. But their courage
failed when they became aware of the flight
of Darius. When their king had given up
the struggle what was there for them to stay
for? To him they were bound, but they had
no conception of a country to whose service
it was their duty to devote their lives. They
fled, suffering greatly in the pursuit.

The Macedonians lost 450 in killed,
Alexander himself being slightly wounded.
The slaughter among the Persians cannot be
estimated. It was put down at more than
100,000. Ptolemy, afterwards King of Egypt,
who was one of Alexander's most trusted
generals, declared that he found a ravine so
choked with dead bodies that he could use
them as a bridge. Ptolemy kept a diary of
the war, which he afterwards embodied in a
regular narrative. Arrian, who wrote the
story of Alexander's campaign in the second
century of our era, had this work before him.

III

THE ARMY OF THE HUNDRED PROVINCES

DURING the twenty months which followed the victory of Issus, Alexander continued to make fresh conquests and to consolidate those already made. He subdued Syria—a name which must be taken to include both Phœnicia and Palestine. Here the two cities of Tyre and Gaza made an obstinate resistance, the two detaining him for no less than nine months. Egypt, which hated its intolerant Persian masters, gave itself up without a struggle. Early in 331 he heard that Darius had collected another huge army, with which to make another effort for his kingdom. The king had lost the western half of his dominions, but the eastern still remained to him, and from this he drew forces which exceeded in number even the great host which he had put into the field at Issus. The

meeting-place was at Arbela, a place still known by the slightly changed name of Erbil, and situated on the caravan-route between Erzeroum and Bagdad ; but the actual battlefield must be looked for some twenty miles away in a level region known by the name of Gangamela.

On the extreme right were the Medes, once the ruling people of Asia and still mindful of their old renown, the Parthian cavalry, and the sturdy mountaineers of the Caucasus ; on the opposite wing were the Bactrians — mostly hardy dwellers in the hills, and famous both for activity and for fierceness—and the native Persians, horse and foot, in alternate formation. But it was in the centre of the line, round the person of Darius, where he stood conspicuous on his royal chariot, that the choicest troops of the Empire were congregated. Here were ranged the Persian Horseguards—a force levied from the noblest families of the race that had ruled Western Asia for more than two centuries. They were known by the proud title of “ Kinsmen of the King,” and the Footguards, also a *corps d'élite*, who carried apples at the butt-end of their pikes. Next to these stood the Carians, probably a colony from the well-known people of that name in Asia Minor, possibly transported by some Persian king to

a settlement in the East. Of all Asiatic races the Carians had shown themselves the most apt to learn the Greek discipline and to rival Greek valour. Next to the Carians, again, stood the Greek mercenaries.

In front of the line were the scythed chariots, numbering two hundred in all, each with its sharp-pointed sides projecting far beyond the horses, and its sword-blades and scythes stretching from the yoke and from the naves of the wheels. (This is the first time that we hear of the scythed chariot. It was a device of a barbarian kind, and seldom, as far as we know, very effective.) Behind the line, again, was a large mixed multitude, drawn from every tribe that still owned the Great King's sway.

Alexander saw that this time he had a formidable enemy to deal with. He had an entrenched camp constructed, as possibly useful in case of a reverse, and he consulted his generals—a course which he seldom followed—as to how an attack might be most advantageously delivered. But when one of his most experienced officers suggested an assault by night, he emphatically rejected the idea. It was, he declared, an unworthy stratagem; victory so won would be worse than defeat. A more powerful reason was probably the danger

of such an attempt. A night attack is always a desperate device.

The first day after coming in sight of the enemy Alexander spent in preparation and consultation. On the morrow he drew out his order of battle. As usual he put himself at the head of the right wing. This was made up of the "Companions," the light infantry, and three out of the six divisions of the phalanx. The left wing, if it may be so called, for there was no centre, consisted of the rest of the phalanx, with a body of cavalry from the allied Greek states.

And now, for the first time, Alexander had a second line in reserve. His numbers were considerably increased, the 35,000 with which he had crossed into Asia having now mounted up to nearly 50,000. And the nature of the battlefield made such an arrangement necessary. The enemy had an enormously superior force and it was necessary to guard against attacks on the flank and the rear. The second line consisted of the light cavalry, the Macedonian archers, contingents from some of the half-barbarous tribes which bordered on Macedonia, some veteran Greek mercenaries and other miscellaneous troops. Some Thracian infantry were detached to guard the camp and the baggage.

The Persians, with their vastly larger numbers, were, of course, extended far beyond the Macedonian line. Left to make the attack, they might easily have turned the flank, or even assailed the rear of their opponents. Alexander, seeing this, and following the tactics which had twice proved so successful, took the offensive. He put himself at the head of the "Companions," who were stationed, as has been said, on the extreme right, and led them forward in person, still keeping more and more to the right, and thus threatening the enemy with the very movement which he had himself reason to dread. He thus not only avoided the iron spikes, which, as a deserter had warned him, had been set to injure the Macedonian cavalry, but almost got beyond the ground which the Persians had caused to be levelled for the operations of their chariots. Fearful at once of being outflanked and of having his chariots made useless, Darius launched some Bactrian and Scythian cavalry against the advancing enemy; Alexander, on the other hand, detached some cavalry of his own to charge the Bactrians, and the action began.

The Bactrians commenced with a success, driving back the Greek horsemen. These fell back on their supports, and advancing again in

increased force, threw the Bactrians into confusion. Squadron after squadron joined the fray, till a considerable part of the Macedonian right and of the Persian left wing was engaged. The Persians were beginning to give way, when Darius saw, as he thought, the time for bringing the scythed chariots into action, and gave the word for them to charge, and for his main line to advance behind them. The charge was made, but failed, almost entirely, of its effect. The Macedonian archers and javelin-throwers wounded many of the horses; some agile skirmishers even seized the reins and dragged down the drivers from their places. Other chariots got as far as the Macedonian line, but recoiled from the bristling line of outstretched pikes; and the few whose drivers were lucky enough or bold enough to break their way through all hindrances were allowed to pass between the Macedonian lines, without being able to inflict any serious damage. Then Alexander delivered his counter attack. He ceased his movement to the right. Wheeling half round, the "Companions" dashed into the open space which the advance of the Bactrian squadrons had left in the Persian line. At the same time his own main line raised the battle-

cry, and moved forward. Once within the enemy's ranks he pushed straight for the place where, as he knew, the battle would be decided, the chariot of the king. The first defence of that all-important position was the Persian cavalry. Better at skirmishing than at hand-to-hand fighting, it broke before his onslaught. Still there remained troops to be reckoned with who might have made the fortune of the day doubtful, the flower of the Persian foot and the veteran Greeks. For a time these men held their ground; they might have held it longer, perhaps with success, but for the same cause which had brought about the disastrous result of Issus, the cowardice of Darius. He had been dismayed to see his chariots fail and his cavalry broken by the charge of the "Companions," and he lost heart altogether when the dreaded phalanx itself, with its bristling array of pikes, seemed to be forcing a way through the line of his infantry and coming nearer to himself. He turned his chariot and fled, the first, when he should have been the last, to leave his post.

The flight of the king was the signal for a general rout, so far at least as the centre and left wing of the Persian army was concerned. It was no longer a battle; it was a massacre.

Alexander pressed furiously on, eager to capture the fugitive Darius. But the very completeness of his victory, it may be said, hindered him. So headlong was the flight that the dust, which, after the months of burning summer heat, lay thick upon the plain, rose like the smoke of a vast conflagration. The darkness was as the darkness of night. Nothing could be seen, but all around were heard the cries of fury and despair, the jingling of the chariot wheels, and the sound of the whips which the terrified charioteers were plying with all their might.

Nor was Alexander permitted to continue the pursuit. Though the Persian left, demoralised by the cowardice of the king, had fled, the right wing had fought with better fortune. It was under the command of Mazæus, who was probably the ablest of the Persian generals, and knew how to use his superiority of numbers. Whilst the sturdy Median infantry engaged the Macedonian front line, Mazæus put himself at the head of the Parthian horse and charged the flank. Parmenio, Alexander's ablest lieutenant—his one general, as he was reported to have said—who was in command, sent an urgent request for help, so hard pressed did he find himself to be. Alexander was greatly

vexed, for he saw that all chance of capturing Darius was lost, but he knew his business too well to neglect the demand. He at once called back his troops from the pursuit, and led them to the help of the left wing. Parmenio had sent the same message to that division of the phalanx which had taken part in the advance of the right wing.

As things turned out, however, the help was hardly needed. On the one hand, the Thesalian cavalry had proved themselves worthy of their old reputation as the best horsemen in Greece. Held during the earlier part of the engagement in reserve, they had made a brilliant charge on the Parthians, and had restored the fortune of the day. And then, on the other hand, Mazæus and his men had felt the same infection of fear which the flight of Darius had communicated to the rest of the army. Parmenio felt the vigour of the enemy's attack languish, though he did not know the cause, and had the satisfaction of regaining, and more than regaining, the ground which he had lost, before the reinforcements arrived.

The day was virtually over, yet the hardest fighting of the battle was yet to take place. The Parthian cavalry, with some squadrons of Persian and Indian horse among them, encoun-

tered, as they retreated across the field of battle, Alexander himself and the "Companions." Their only hope of escape was to cut through the advancing force. It was no time for tactics, only for a desperate charge for life. Each man was fighting for himself, and he fought with a fury that made him a match even for Macedonian discipline and valour. And the enemy had among them some of the most expert swordsmen in the world. Anyhow, the "Companions" suffered more severely than they did in any other engagement in the war. Sixty were slain in the course of a few minutes, three of the principal officers were wounded, and even Alexander himself was in serious danger. But the Parthians thought only of saving their lives, and when they once saw the way clear before them they were only too glad to follow it.

The Persians achieved one more success. A brigade of Indian and Persian horse had plunged through a gap which the movement of the phalanx had left in the line, and attacked the camp. The Thracians who guarded it were hampered by the number of the prisoners whom they had to watch. Many of these escaped. The mother of Darius—the effort had been made for her—might have been one

of them, but she refused to go. By this time some troops had come to the rescue of the camp, and the Persian cavalry had to fly.

The great battle of Arbela was over. It was the most hardly won as it was the most conclusive of all Alexander's victories. The Persians made no further stand. The great enemy of Greece had disappeared from the stage of history. But we shall find the powerful forces which Persia represented appear again in another shape.

BOOK IV

ROME AND CARTHAGE

I. THE SERVANTS OF MARS

I HAVE had to speak more than once of mercenary troops employed by the Greek cities in Sicily to help them in their long struggle with Carthage. The use of such troops was a regular practice with Carthage ; it was only on great occasions that this State put its own citizens in the field. With the Greeks, on the contrary, it was the exception to employ any but citizen soldiers. The mercenary was suspected, and not without reason, of being a ready instrument in the hands of any unscrupulous person who might be seeking to establish a tyranny. As time went on, however, he became more and more a necessity. As society became more complex, the citizen found himself less willing to bear arms and less

capable of doing it. And the exhaustion caused by almost incessant wars made it necessary to seek elsewhere for men who should fill up the depleted ranks. Hence the employment of mercenaries even by free cities. Whatever their use in time of war, these auxiliaries were naturally difficult to manage or dispose of when peace had been restored.¹ Such certainly the Syracusans found to be the case with a body of Italian mercenaries whom Agathocles² had had in his service. They were paid off and peremptorily ordered to return home. This prospect was not agreeable; it meant a return to regular and not very profitable labour; they greatly preferred to live by the sword. They professed, however, to be willing to obey the command, and accordingly marched in the direction of Italy, intending, it appeared, to be ferried across the Straits of Messina. Whether they had fixed on any settled plan, or yielded to the sudden attraction of a chance that seemed to offer

¹ Xenophon gives in the later books of the *Anabasis* a graphic description of the troubles that arose when the "Ten Thousand," or such as were left of them (between eight and nine thousand), had made their way to the coast, and were looking out for employment.

² See pp. 120-21.

itself, cannot be determined. What we know is that when they reached Messina, from which they were to have embarked, and had been imprudently invited within the walls by its citizens, they seized the town with all that it contained. Here they established themselves, taking the name of *Mamertini*, or "Servants of Mars" (*Mamers* was the Oscan name for the deity known to the Romans as *Mars*). A similar body held the adjacent mainland, and the two, joined as they were by an informal alliance of interests, became a formidable power. They practically lived by robbery by land and sea, and their existence became an intolerable nuisance to the two powers that shared Sicily between them. For once the interests of Syracuse and Carthage were identical. The Syracusan troops inflicted a severe defeat on the Mamertini, and, with the help of their new allies, closely besieged their town.

The Mamertini had for some time perceived that they could not stand alone, but must take sides either with Rome or with Carthage. They were divided as to the choice, but circumstances inclined them to Rome, and they sent envoys asking for protection and help. The Senate, to whom this application was

addressed, were not a little perplexed. They had just inflicted a severe punishment on a body of mercenaries who had done at Rhegium exactly the same thing that the Mamertini had done at Messana. They postponed the matter more than once, possibly in the hope that the necessity of deciding might pass away. But the General Assembly of the People, to whom the Senate referred the matter—this dual government had at times its convenience—was not disposed to be so indifferent. A resolution was passed that the Mamertini were to be helped, and Appius Claudius, one of the Consuls of the year, was sent in command of an expedition.

When he arrived, he found the situation considerably changed. There was a Carthaginian as well as a Roman party among the Mamertini, and the former had now gained the upper hand. A Carthaginian fleet was in the harbour and a body of Carthaginian troops in possession of the citadel. Fortunately for Rome, there was no one of energy or determination to manage affairs. The officer in command of the fleet was seized by the pro-Roman faction, and Hanno, who was in charge of the citadel, consented to evacuate it, if he were allowed to withdraw with the honours of

war. Rome became possessed of Messina without having to strike a blow. She never lost it—it was not her way to lose what she had once gained—and she found it a most valuable position. But the acquisition of Messina meant war with Carthage. Carthage began by crucifying the unlucky general who had abandoned the citadel, and then, entering into close alliance with Hiero, invested the city. Appius Claudius made proposals for peace, which were not accepted. Then he made a sally from the town and inflicted such a defeat on the enemy that they raised the siege. The next year Hiero, who had the sagacity to see that Rome would be a more useful ally than Carthage, changed sides. Rome had its foot down in Sicily and never took it up.

II

FOR THE RULE OF THE SEA

I AM not going to tell the whole story of the Punic Wars. In each of them, however, there is something that belongs to my subject. In the First, with which I am now concerned, there is the extraordinary effort by which the Romans put themselves in a position to contend with Carthage for the dominion of the sea. There is nothing quite like it in history, and nothing, one might say, which more plainly showed the wonderful fitness of the nation for its great destiny of ruling the world. Polybius, one of the most thoughtful and judicious of ancient historians, becomes enthusiastic in his praise of this marvellous effort. He says: "There could be no more signal proof of their courage, or rather audacity. They had no resources at all for the enterprise; they had never even entertained the idea of a naval

war—indeed it was the first time they had thought of it—but they engaged in the enterprise with such daring that, without so much as a preliminary trial, they took upon themselves to meet the Carthaginians at sea, on which they had held for generations an undisputed supremacy.” The first thing, of course, was to build the ships. They had not even a model to copy, till one of the Carthaginian men-of-war happened to run aground, and so fell into their hands. And while the ships were being built the crews which were to man them were being exercised. Sets of rowers’ benches were constructed on dry ground ; the crews sat on them as they would have to sit in actual vessels. In the middle the fogleman, as we may call him, was stationed. As he gave the signal, they stretched their bodies and arms forwards, and drew them back again, all in time. By the time the ships were finished, the crews were as ready as this kind of teaching could make them. A little practice in actual rowing on the sea was given them, and then the new fleet entered upon its first naval campaign.

The first experience of the new force was not encouraging. A squadron of seventeen ships under one of the Consuls for the year, a

Scipio, great-uncle of a famous man of whom I shall have to speak hereafter, was shut up in the harbour of Lipara, and had to surrender. The other Consul was put in command of the fleet and at once set about suiting it better to the actual conditions of warfare. He had the sagacity to see that there was more in seamanship than could be acquired by a landsman in a few weeks, and the object that he set before himself was that seamanship should not be allowed to count for more than could possibly be helped. To put the matter shortly, a battle on sea was to be made as like to a battle on land as could be managed. He adopted accordingly the suggestion of an ingenious inventor that the ships should be fitted with boarding-machines, or "crows" (*corvi*), as they afterwards came to be called. The actual "crow" was a gangway, four feet wide and thirty-six feet long, with a wooden railing on either side, about the height of a man's knee. This construction was fastened to a pole, some twenty-four feet high, that was placed near the bowsprit. It was fitted with pulleys and ropes so that it could be dropped at pleasure in any direction that might be convenient. When it was dropped to the deck of a hostile ship it acted as a grappling-iron, for it was fitted with

a heavy spike which ran into the timber. If the two ships came together side by side the boarders could scramble over the bulwarks, and the chief use of the machine was for grappling. If they met prow to prow the gangway, which was broad enough for two men to pass over it abreast, became very useful.

When this equipment was complete, Duilius boldly put to sea, sailing for a spot on the north coast of Sicily where the Carthaginians were busy plundering. As soon as the Roman fleet came in sight the Carthaginian admiral—one of the many Hannibals who figure in these wars—manned his ships, and went out of harbour to meet it. He was superior in numbers, having 130 ships, while the Romans could have had but few over 100 (they had built 120 and had lost 17). But it was on his superiority in seamanship that he most relied. For the Romans as sailors he had, and not without reason, a profound contempt. So strong was this feeling of superiority that he did not take ordinary pains in keeping his ships in order. "He advanced," says Polybius, "as though he was about to seize an easy prey." He and his officers saw the "crows," and could not make out what they meant. That there was anything dangerous about them no one

seems to have imagined, for the Carthaginian captains that led the van of the fleet charged straight at their antagonists. When they came to close quarters they made a very discomfiting discovery. Any ship that came into contact with a Roman vessel was immediately grappled ; no sooner had it been grappled than it was boarded by a number of armed men, and became the scene of a conflict that was practically the same as if it were being fought on dry land. The Carthaginian crews were not prepared for this ; it is not improbable that they were insufficiently armed, for they counted on ramming and sinking their antagonists. Thirty ships were captured in this way ; the rest of the fleet sheered off when they saw what had happened to the van, and tried to manœuvre, taking the enemy, if possible, at a disadvantage. They were able, however, to affect little or nothing. If they were to do any damage to the enemy, they had, sooner or later, to come into contact with him. But this contact was very likely to be fatal. The "crow" was promptly dropped, and the dreaded Romans had to be encountered. Twenty more ships were thus lost, and the rest were glad enough to make their escape.

This victory was undoubtedly a great

achievement, and Rome did not fail to appreciate it properly. The Consul Duilius became at once one of the most famous of Roman heroes. He did not perform, possibly had no opportunity of performing, any other service of much importance, but the victory of Mylæ established his reputation for ever. A story is told of the privileges accorded to him in his old age. He had a fancy for being attended by a couple of flute players when he was returning home from an entertainment, and though the practice was thought inconsistent with the simplicity of Roman manners, his fellow-citizens endured it with patience in consideration of the singular service which he had rendered to his country.

Nor was the victory at Mylæ a solitary success. Four years afterwards there was another great sea-fight at Heraclea,¹ on the south coast of Sicily. The Romans had determined to adopt a policy which, as we have seen, had been previously followed with success, and to attack Carthage on her own territory. A very large fleet was collected or constructed to carry out this purpose. There were, according to Polybius, 330 ships, each carrying on an

¹ The battle is sometimes spoken of as the battle of Ecnomus.

average 300 rowers and sailors and 120 soldiers or marines. This gives a total of nearly 140,000, a huge number which Polybius mentions with astonishment, but apparently without disbelief. The Carthaginian fleet, which numbered 350 men-of-war, prepared to dispute the passage.

The battle that followed was fiercely contested. The description that Polybius gives of it is not easy to understand, but the main features are clear enough. In manœuvring the Carthaginians more than held their own. Whatever success they won was due to the rapidity and skill with which they moved ; but they could not contend on equal terms with their antagonists when they had to come to close quarters. "Over thirty" of their ships were sunk. Polybius does not give, doubtless because he could not ascertain, a more definite figure, while the Romans lost twenty-four. So far there was no great disparity. But, on the other hand, sixty-four Carthaginian men-of-war were captured, whereas not a single Roman ship was taken. Plainly, when the "crows" could be brought into use, and the struggle between ship and ship was decided by hand-to-hand fighting, the old Roman superiority declared itself.

III

THE MARTYR PATRIOT

THE two Consuls of the year were in command of the fleet at Heraclea, and the historian attributes some of the energy and determination with which the battle was fought to the encouragement of their presence. The junior of the two, M. Atilius Regulus, is one of the most romantic heroes of Roman story, and it is impossible not to give a short account of the rest of his career. It was by an accident, the death of the duly elected Consul of the year very shortly after his coming into office, that Regulus happened to share the command of the expedition to Africa. But he had held the Consulship before, and had then so distinguished himself—he had in fact the glory of completing the Roman conquest of Italy—that he had obtained the honour of a triumph. After the victory at Heraclea, he effected a successful

landing on the African coast. The departure of his colleague, who was summoned home, left him in sole command. Aided by an insurrection of the native tribes, always ready to revenge themselves on their oppressive masters, he reduced Carthage to great straits. That haughty State even brought itself to ask for peace. Regulus demanded such conditions—what they were we are not told—that the Carthaginians unanimously resolved to bear any extremity of suffering rather than submit to them.

And now there was a change of fortune. It came with dramatic suddenness, and signally illustrated the aphorism which the moralists of antiquity repeated with such frequency and emphasis, “pride goeth before a fall.” The Carthaginian recruiting agents, when they visited Greece, found a man who was admirably suited for their purpose. Xanthippus was one of those Spartan soldiers of fortune who in several conspicuous instances affected the course of history. It was the Spartan Gylippus who saved Syracuse when it was almost in the grasp of Athens; and now it was another Spartan who at least prolonged for a century the existence of Carthage. Xanthippus had, it would seem, taken service in some subordi-

nate capacity as an officer of mercenaries. He was an acute observer, and saw that the resources of Carthage were but ill employed. In the two arms of elephants and cavalry her army was so superior to the Romans that defeat could not but be the result of mismanagement. These opinions, freely expressed to his comrades, came round before long to the ears of the authorities. Xanthippus was summoned before them; he explained his views and pointed out some changes in the management of the campaign which it would be necessary to make. His hearers were greatly impressed by the force and clearness of his statement, and gave him what was probably a provisional command of the army. He had now the opportunity of showing his military abilities. He began by manœuvring bodies of troops, and showed such tactical skill as to excite the admiration of the men. They loudly demanded to be led against the enemy, stipulating that the leader should be Xanthippus. It is needless to describe the battle which followed. The hundred elephants which Xanthippus put in part of his line were used to good effect. They did not actually break the Roman legions, but they inflicted a great deal of damage, and prepared the way for the infantry behind them.

In cavalry the Carthaginian army was so much stronger than the Roman—four thousand, we are told, to five hundred — that there was practically no conflict. In the end the army of Regulus was nearly annihilated. Two thousand men made good their retreat to the town of Aspis on the coast ; five hundred, among whom was the Consul himself, were taken prisoners ; the rest, more than twelve thousand in number, perished on the field of battle.

For five years Regulus remained in captivity. Then—so runs the story—he was sent to Rome in company of some ambassadors who were to propose a treaty of peace. It was expected of him that he should do his best to recommend the proposal to his countrymen ; his release was to be the reward of his help. But Regulus had very different views of the situation. He thought that peace, at least on any such terms as Carthage was willing to accept, would not be for the interest of Rome, and he determined to oppose. He asked permission to speak ; his right to deliver an opinion as a member of the Senate he considered himself to have lost by having fallen into the hands of the enemy. Leave granted, he delivered an oration in which he did his best to dissuade his countrymen from

making peace, and succeeded. But his success was fatal, not only to his chances of liberty, but to his life. He was taken back to Carthage, and there—so the story has it—put to death by cruel tortures. The tale is told by many writers, but Polybius, who is by far the best authority for events of the time, is absolutely silent about it, and his silence, in view of the strong feeling in favour of the Romans which is noticeable in him, is a very important consideration. According to another story, which seems to have as little or as much foundation, the Senate handed over to the widow of Regulus two noble Carthaginian prisoners. The woman, in revenge for her husband's death, treated them with such barbarity that, for very shame, the Senate took them out of her hands. Perhaps we shall be justified in regarding both legends as specimens of that wonderful crop of inventions which springs up whenever the feelings of a nation are greatly roused by the agitations of war.

This was not the only loss that Rome suffered during the latter part of the war. She lost one fleet by a storm, and another by the folly of its commander. This man was one of the Claudian family, a house which showed more ability in politics than in war. He seems to

have fallen into the mistake of underrating the enemy, made an attack upon them from which he was compelled to withdraw, and when he saw that the day was lost, made his own escape with a discreditable precipitancy. The battle was fought in and outside the harbour of Drepanum, a town in the extreme west of the Island. Claudius was indicted on his return to Rome, heavily fined, and thrown into prison. He is said to have committed suicide. In later writers we find a story which has something of the look of having been invented to point a moral. It was represented to him on the morning of the battle by the keepers of the sacred chickens, that the sacred birds, whose conduct was held to foretell the future, would not eat. This was a most sinister sign. The insolent soldier received the intimation with contempt. "If they won't eat," he cried, "they shall at least drink!" and he gave orders that they should be thrown into the sea. It is certainly, whether true or not, a characteristic illustration of the arrogance of the Claudian family. Such, too, is the other story which supplements it. Some years afterwards a sister of the unlucky or impious general was greatly incommoded by the crush of people coming out of the amphitheatre. "I wish," she

cried, "that my brother were alive again, and would take another fleet to Sicily, and ease us of some of this superfluous crowd." She was fined for her *incivility*, the use of language unbecoming a citizen.

In B.C. 241 this long war at last came to an end. Both sides had suffered fearfully both in men and means. The Romans lost 700 ships of war and the Carthaginians about 200 less, for though they had not shown themselves a match for their antagonists in fighting, they knew better how to deal with bad conditions of weather. The Romans had a way of going straight to their point, whatever obstacles were in their way. Storm or no storm, they went on, and the result of their obstinacy was often not a little disastrous.¹

On the whole the balance of success was considerably in favour of Rome, and the conditions of the peace showed a distinct gain. The most important article was the total withdrawal of Carthage from Sicily. For more than three centuries she had renewed her

¹ We may compare the way in which they made their great military roads. These went by the nearest way from point to point, not engineered according to modern practice.

attempts to possess herself of the Island. Now she was compelled to definitely renounce her ambition. This renunciation marks an important stage in the history of the world.

IV

THE SONS OF LIGHTNING

THE later years of the First Punic War had brought to the front a man of extraordinary genius, Hamilcar, surnamed Barca.¹ As his son, Hannibal, was born in this very same year, we may safely put his age at twenty-five. Hamilcar kept the Romans in check, first at Ercté, a stronghold in Sicily, and afterwards at Eryx in the same island, for five years, and might have even changed the course of the war if he could have been adequately

¹ "Barca" is equivalent to the Hebrew *Barak*, and means "lightning." We may compare the surname of *Boanerges*, "Sons of Thunder," given by Christ to the sons of Zebedee. In 247 B.C. he was appointed to the chief command of the forces of Carthage, being then "a very young man," if we may so translate the term *adolescentulus* which Livy applies to him. This word, however, is very vague. It covers any age from eighteen to upwards of thirty. Cicero, for instance, uses it of Cæsar at the age of thirty-two.

supported from home. So greatly did his military ability impress the Romans that when negotiations for peace were commenced, he was permitted to march out of Eryx with all the honours of war. During the next four years he rendered the greatest service to his country, which had been brought to the very verge of ruin by the revolt of the mercenaries. It was Hamilcar, in fact, who saved Carthage from destruction. This done, he devoted the remainder of his life to the working out of a great scheme which was to restore his country to the commanding position from which she had been deposed by the disasters of the First Punic War. Sicily had been lost ; another province, far larger, and possibly more valuable, might be found in Spain. Carthage had had for several generations a large trade with Spain, and probably possessed some trading ports or fortified factories on the southern coast. Hannibal crossed over into Spain with a general commission to do what he could for the interests of Carthage in that country. We know next to nothing about the details of his action, but it is clear that he was eminently successful. He practically conquered a considerable part of Spain, and did it without any charge on the home revenues, which, indeed,

were largely augmented by the sums which he sent home. After a prosperous career of nearly nine years he fell in battle. This was 229 B.C., when he was little more than forty years of age. His work was taken up by his son-in-law, Hasdrubal. Hasdrubal was, by all accounts, more of a politician than a soldier. The interests of Carthage, however, were furthered rather than hindered by this difference of character. Hamilcar had impressed the Spanish tribes by his military genius and resources. Hasdrubal conciliated them. His wife was the daughter of a Spanish chief. Altogether he did much to consolidate the Carthaginian power in the Peninsula. Not the least of his services was his foundation of New Carthage, a place admirably chosen for strength of position and convenience of access. After eight years of rule he was assassinated by a slave whose master he had put to death.

The successor of Hasdrubal was the son of Hamilcar, a son who possessed a military genius even greater than that of his father. Hannibal is ranked by common consent among the greatest generals of the world. If Rome could have been overthrown by any enemy, it would have been by him, so brilliant was his strategy, so great his capacity for leadership—nothing is

more remarkable in his career than his power of giving unity to the varied components of a mercenary army—and so resolute his hostility to Rome. He himself narrated towards the close of his life the incident which seems to have made this feeling the dominant motive of his life. He was then in exile, and the guest of Antiochus the Great, King of Syria. Some jealous courtiers had suggested to Antiochus that Hannibal was not indisposed to come to terms with Rome. He then told his story.

“When my father was about to go on his expedition to Spain, I was nine years old. I was standing near the altar when he made the usual sacrifice to Zeus. This successfully performed, he bade all the other worshippers stand back, and calling me to him, asked me whether I wished to go with him. I gave an eager assent, and begged him most earnestly to take me. On this he took me by the right hand, led me up to the altar, and bade me lay my hand upon the victim, and swear eternal enmity to Rome.”

No vow was ever more faithfully performed.

Of Hannibal's early years we know but little. He was present at the battle in which his father was killed, being then in his nineteenth year.

During the period of his brother-in-law's command he was continuously employed on active service. Hasdrubal's ability, as has been already said, was political rather than military, and the operations in the field were largely conducted by the younger man, and conducted with conspicuous success. His habit of victory and his great personal qualities made him the favourite of the army. Livy gives us a vivid picture of the man as he was in his youth.

“Bold in the extreme in incurring peril, he was perfectly cool in its presence. No toil could weary his body or conquer his spirit. Heat and cold he bore with equal patience. The cravings of nature, not the pleasure of the palate, determined the measure of his food and drink. His waking and sleeping hours had no relation to day and night. Such time as business left him, he gave to repose, but it was not on a soft couch or in stillness that he sought it. Many saw him, wrapped in his military cloak, lying on the ground amidst the sentries and pickets. His dress was not one whit superior to that of his comrades, but his accoutrements and his horses were conspicuously splendid. Of all the cavalry and the infantry, he was by far the first soldier, earliest to join the battle and last to leave it.”

The quarrel with Rome, undoubtedly provoked of set purpose by Hannibal, began with his attack on Saguntum (now *Murviedro*, i.e., *Muri Veteres*, "The Old Walls," in Valencia). This town was in alliance with the Romans, who sent envoys to Hannibal bidding him desist from the attack, and to Carthage, complaining of their general's action. Hannibal refused to receive the embassy; at Carthage the answer given was practically a refusal to interfere. Meanwhile Saguntum was left without help. When it fell, after a siege of several months, the Romans felt that war was inevitable, and made preparations for carrying it on with vigour. They probably under-estimated the strength of the enemy. The army voted, largely made up, it must be remembered, of recruits enrolled for the purpose, amounted to about 70,000; and the fleet was to number about 250 ships. Everything, however, was to be done in due form. Another embassy was sent to Carthage, with instructions to put the direct question, whether the government accepted the responsibility for the destruction of Saguntum. There was, it is true, a peace-party in Carthage, but it had been reduced to helplessness. The envoys could obtain no satisfaction. Their spokesman, one of the great Fabian House, on receiving a reply

which could have no meaning but war, gathered up his robe into a fold and cried, "We bring you peace and war ; take which you please." He was met with a fierce cry, "Give us which you will." Fabius shook out the fold with the words, "I give you war," and the answer was, "We accept it."

I shall pass as quickly as possible over the early operations of the war. Early in the spring of 218 B.C. Hannibal left his winter quarters at New Carthage, crossed the Ebro, and fought his way from that river to the foot of the Pyrenees. The Pyrenæan range itself presented no great difficulties. At the Rhone he encountered formidable opposition, but effected a crossing with great skill. In his march from the Rhone to the Alps, and in his passage of the Alps themselves he suffered little from hostile attacks. But the natural difficulties of the route were great, and he was late. He appears to have left New Carthage at the beginning of May. We may be sure that the start was made at the earliest practicable moment, but the delay was to cost much. Could he have moved a month earlier it would have been well. As it was he did not reach the Alps till the beginning of October, when the snows have already begun to fall on the

higher ranges. The crossing was effected in fifteen days, but the cost in men and beasts of burden was tremendous. Hannibal had started from New Carthage with 90,000 foot and 16,000 horse ; he descended into the Lombard plains with 20,000 infantry and 6,000 horse. He had very little more than one-fourth of his original numbers. He had not indeed lost the other three-fourths by battle or by disease. Many had deserted, many had been sent home, and the troops that remained were thoroughly trustworthy. But the fact remains that an army of 26,000 was even ludicrously small to be confronted with such an enemy as Rome. (It may be noted that the infantry was made up of Africans and Spaniards. The higher posts in the army were filled by Carthaginians, and some probably served in the cavalry, but in the main the army consisted of mercenaries.)

It would be a pity to omit so picturesque an incident as Hannibal's dream. Livy thus relates it : "He saw—so the story goes—a youth of godlike shape, who said that he had been sent by Jupiter to conduct the army of Hannibal into Italy ; that he was therefore to follow, without ever turning away his eyes. At first Hannibal followed, trembling,

looking neither round him nor behind ; after a while, with the curiosity natural to the human mind, as he thought what that on which he was forbidden to look back might be, he could no longer restrain his eyes. What he saw was a serpent of portentous size moving onward with fearful destruction of bushes and trees ; close behind the creature followed a storm-cloud with crashing thunder. He asked what this portent meant, and was told, 'It means the devastation of Italy.' He must go straight on, and leave the fates in darkness."

V

THE AVALANCHE FROM THE ALPS

A FEW days for rest and refreshment of the army were imperatively needed, but only a very few could be spared. Hannibal could not hope to face his antagonists without a large increase to his army, and this increase he could only get for the moment from the Gauls, the people in whose country he was, though later on reinforcements might be expected from Carthage. The Gauls would be ready enough to join him, for they were permanently hostile to Rome ; but they would have to be satisfied of his strength. A war had opportunely broken out between the Taurini (Turin) and the Insubres (Milan). Hannibal took the part of the latter, and stormed a stronghold of the Taurini. From that moment he could practically command the services of as many

Gauls as he wanted. But he had now to meet the Romans for the first time in the field.

P. Cornelius Scipio, one of the Consuls of the year, had had the province of Spain allotted to him. His intention had been to dispute the passage of the Rhone, but Hannibal had moved with such rapidity that Scipio found himself anticipated. The Carthaginians were already across the river when Scipio reached its mouth, and had secured so long a start that it was useless to follow him. But the news of the Carthaginian's arrival in Italy seemed to demand instant action. He handed his army over to Cnaeus, his brother and second-in-command, reserving for himself a few picked troops only, and sailed for Italy, where he took over the division under the charge of the prætor Manlius. He marched as rapidly as possible to Placentia (Piacenza), where he crossed the Po, and advanced up the left bank of the river till he reached the Ticinus (*Ticino*), one of its tributaries. Over this stream he threw a bridge, which he protected by building a fort. Hannibal was encamped some ten miles to the westward, at a spot called Ictumuli, and had sent out Maharbal in command of some Numidian cavalry to ravage the country; sparing, however, all the territory belonging to

the Gallic tribes. Maharbal was recalled when the advance of the Romans became known, and Hannibal moved out of his camp, in personal command of his cavalry. Scipio did exactly the same. The battle that ensued was therefore wholly a battle of cavalry. This put the Romans at a great disadvantage. They were distinctly inferior in this arm, and the nature of the country, an expanse of unincumbered plain, gave the enemy every opportunity of making the best of the advantage. Scipio had put some light-armed troops in the van. They seemed to have been of the poorest quality, for they fled at the first impact of the two armies. The regular cavalry of the Romans showed to better advantage. They held their own for some time against their assailants, also a force of regular cavalry. But they were at a great disadvantage. The fugitives from the front had thrown their lines into disorder. These it was impossible to keep firm when those panic-stricken creatures were trying to find their way through them. Then there happened a great misfortune. Scipio was so seriously wounded that he had to give up the command. According to the most generally received account, he was saved from capture by the valour of his son, then a lad of eighteen.

We shall hear of him again, for he became in later years the great hero of the war, Scipio Africanus the elder. Some of the Roman cavalry made a determined stand round their wounded chief and contrived to carry him off the field. But the battle was lost. The defeat, however, was not so complete that the Roman camp was in any danger. Hannibal, who was still hampered by his scanty numbers, was content to rest on the field of battle. That night the Romans hurriedly retreated to Placentia, hoping to find their bridge unbroken. They had actually reached their destination before Hannibal became aware of their departure. He was in time enough, however, to capture some six hundred stragglers whom he found lingering on the left bank of the Po. A great raft had been constructed for the passage of the river, and they were at work in loosing it. Hannibal came upon them while they were so employed. He captured the men, but the raft, which it would have been a great advantage to secure, floated down-stream. Two days were spent in looking for a practicable ford. Before this could be found the Roman army had recovered its order and confidence. It suffered, however, a most damaging blow within the next few days.

A body of Gallic auxiliaries, two thousand infantry, and two hundred cavalry, deserted to Hannibal, cutting down the sentries at the camp gate. The Carthaginian general gave them a hearty welcome, and held out to them great promises of advancement and reward. For the present he sent them to their homes. The best service, in his judgment, that they could do was to spread abroad the report of his generosity and of the Roman defeat.

Scipio now moved southward, falling back to a position near the river Trebia, a tributary of the Po, which flows into it on its right or southern bank. Here he fortified a camp, and sat down to await the arrival of Sempronius, his colleague in the Consulship, who had been recalled from his province (Sicily) to take part in the defence of Italy. He was suffering greatly from his wound, and was unequal to the active duties of command, which, however, he was unwilling to hand over to a substitute. Probably it would have been unconstitutional to do so, when the other Consul was within reach. Yet the prætor Manlius, in whose charge the army had originally been, was probably in the camp. Constitutional forms, as we shall see again and again, weakened the military energies of Rome. Nothing could be imagined more absurd than

that the army should have been entrusted to generals, changed every year, and elected by popular vote. To oppose such men to the unequalled genius of Hannibal was to ensure defeat. The mere permanence of the Carthaginian command gave him an immense advantage. But we must never forget the other side of the case. Without these constitutional forms neither Rome nor Greece (about which the historian has to say much the same thing) could have been what they were. We must expect to find in a nation as in a man the defects of its great qualities.

Sempronius joined his colleague some time, it would seem, during the month of November. He was all for action. "It is intolerable," he urged, "that Italy should be invaded and Rome threatened in this fashion. And what are we waiting for? There is no third army that can join us. Our men will lose all heart if we let them sit in their camp while the enemy plunders our friends." All this is natural enough, especially when we know that the Romans had very little idea, so far, of what Hannibal really was. But Livy, doubtless, is right when he adds that Sempronius had before his eyes the approaching election of Consuls. On the 1st of January ensuing he would have

to go out of office, and yield up his command. If he was to gain the distinction of a victory he must strike at once.

He was encouraged by success in an affair in which he had engaged against the more prudent counsels of his colleague. He had strongly urged the duty of defending the friendly Gauls, had overruled the opposition of Scipio, and had actually carried off the honours of victory in a considerable cavalry skirmish.

Hannibal's plan was sufficiently simple. He was well aware—for what we should now call his "intelligence department" seems to have been admirably managed¹—of Sempronius's eagerness for battle. In the country that lay between the two camps was a spot which seemed admirably suited for an ambush; the bed of a stream, closed in on either side by steep banks, and enclosing a considerable space of level ground, thickly covered with bush. Here he put his brother Mago with a picked force of 2,000 men, composed of equal numbers of cavalry and infantry. "You have an enemy," he said in dismissing them, "who is blind to these stratagems of war." How familiar the words have been made by recent experiences of our

¹ The Gallic auxiliaries in the Roman camp were his chief sources of information.

own! These arrangements made, Hannibal sent his Numidian cavalry at dawn the next day with instructions to ride up to the Roman camp, to pour a shower of missiles upon the sentries, and, if possible, to provoke an engagement. Sempronius was, he knew, eager to fight. This insulting demonstration would stir the temper of the men in such a way that they would obey with enthusiasm a command to advance. The device was completely successful. Sempronius led forth his men in hot haste after the Numidians, who retreated in apparent disorder. The Romans, thus hurriedly summoned, had not had a meal; their horses had not been fed; and they suffered from cold as well as from hunger. It was a snowy day in November, and the region, the marshy, low-lying ground between the Alps and the Apennines, had an inclement climate. More than this, they had to cross the river, whose waters, swollen by the autumn rains, and now breast high, struck a piercing cold into their limbs. When they emerged on the other side of the stream they could scarcely grasp their weapons.

Hannibal's men were in very different case when they were led forth to encounter the enemy, warmed by fires in their tents, and strengthened by a leisurely meal. The order of battle was

this. The slingers were in front ; on either wing the cavalry and the elephants ; in the centre the heavy-armed infantry. The total number is given by Polybius at about forty thousand. Half of these were infantry, Spaniards, Africans, and Gauls, these last representing the addition which Hannibal had been able to make to the army of the Alps. The cavalry numbered more than ten thousand, Here also Gauls appear as " Celtic allies." Of the slingers there were eight thousand. The Roman force was almost exactly equal, but differently made up. It had but four thousand cavalry, as against ten thousand. Of the infantry, sixteen thousand were Romans, and twenty thousand auxiliaries.

It was among the light-armed and the cavalry that the first signs of disorder and weakness could be seen. They were specially depressed by suffering and exhaustion. A light-armed soldier is nothing if he has lost his mobility, and this is exactly what had happened to the Romans. They could render little or no help to the heavy-armed, whose flanks and front were alike exposed, without any kind of covering, to hostile attack. The centre, nevertheless, offered a stout resistance to the enemy. For a time they held their ground manfully, and in

one direction did more than hold it. A body of ten thousand men broke through the Carthaginian line, and steadily made their way to Placentia, where, of course, they were in safety. Of the rest of the army few survived. Their line was first broken by the unexpected charge of the ambushed force. This was actually in the rear of the Roman infantry, and the attack which they made from behind on the legions, occupied as they were with what was going on in front, was very destructive.

Many, also, were crushed by the elephants, which gave valuable help to their side, not, however, without some counterbalancing mischief. The animals, once wounded, became unmanageable, and were quite as likely to damage their friends as their foes. This was, indeed, the last as well as the first occasion on which Hannibal used them, for the cold was so severe that all but one perished. We may sum up what is recorded of the effectiveness of the elephant in ancient warfare by saying that his first appearance was terrifying, that experience greatly lessened the fear with which he was regarded, as the means of dealing with him were soon learnt, and that he was always an incalculable and unreliable force.

The season was now far advanced, consider-

ably beyond the time when it was usual to suspend military operations for the year. Hannibal retired into winter quarters, though his cavalry never ceased to scour and ravage the country. At Rome there was much alarm, shown, however, in a resolute attempt to do all that was possible in the way of preparation for the future.

VI

THE DISASTER AT THE LAKE

THE winter of 218-217 Hannibal spent in Cisalpine Gaul. Livy tells us that his position here was uneasy, that the Gauls were dissatisfied with the state of affairs, that they had expected the plunder of Italy, but found themselves burdened by the presence of a powerful guest, and that, in consequence, more than one plot was laid for the assassination of Hannibal. Whatever truth there may be in this story, it is certain that the Carthaginian general made good use of his time by recruiting among the Gauls. As many as sixty thousand foot soldiers and four thousand horsemen are said to have joined his standard. Early in the spring of 217 he crossed the Apennines. The passage of this mountain range was made without difficulty ; it was when he reached the low-lying country between the Arno and the Serchio

that his troubles began. His troops were decimated by sickness; multitudes of the baggage and cavalry horses perished; he was himself attacked by ophthalmia in so severe a form that he lost the sight of one eye. When he had extricated himself and his army from the marshes, he marched on, plundering and wasting the country as he went.

Of the two Consular armies one was at Ariminum (Rimini), nominally watching an enemy who was now busy elsewhere, the other was at Arretium (Arezzo). It was the latter that Hannibal designed to engage, his plans being laid in such a way as to show that his political sagacity was not less remarkable than his military genius. The Roman general was C. Flaminius, a vehement advocate of plebeian rights. He had denounced the incapacity of the Senate and of the patrician generals. He had gained some distinction as a soldier, though, as a matter of fact, his victories had been won by the valour of his troops, which had triumphed in spite of their general's blunders. During his canvass for the Consulship he had loudly proclaimed that, put at the head of the army, he would speedily make an end of the invader. Now the time was come for him to make good

his boast. If he had been himself disposed to hang back, though there is no reason for supposing that he doubted of the result, he could not disappoint his friends and followers. The camp was half filled, we are told, with adventurers who had thronged to get a share in the Carthaginian plunder. Hannibal marched slowly past the Romans, ravaging the country as he went, and Flaminius, infuriated by the sight, immediately broke up his camp and pursued him. The omens were, it was said, of the gloomiest kind. When the Consul mounted his horse the animal stumbled and threw him ; when the standard was to be removed all the efforts of the officer whose business it was to take charge of it was unable to stir it from the ground. Flaminius was wholly unmoved by these occurrences, and followed Hannibal in hot haste. The Carthaginian laid a trap for his antagonist, into which the Roman fell with an almost ridiculous simplicity. The road southward led past Lake Trasumennus. Here it was narrow, the mountains approaching near to the water-side ; a little further on there was an open space of some extent ; after this again the mountains closed in again and made a narrow defile. These features are not visible to any one who approaches the place from the

north ; and the Consul seems to have taken no pains to acquaint himself with the road which he was following. Hannibal barred the southern outlet with a strong force of his picked troops ; his cavalry he put in ambush at the point of entrance ; the high ground that bordered the road on the landward side he occupied with his slingers and light-armed troops. Flaminius reached the lake at sunset on the day of his breaking up his camp at Arretium, and bivouacked there for the night. Next day, at early dawn, he moved forward, again without reconnoitring, and reached the open space described before. A heavy morning mist hung over the country, and the Romans saw nothing but the road on which they were marching. Their first sight of the enemy was when they reached the defile where Hannibal himself was in position. Almost at the same moment the mist rolled away, and they saw that the mountain-sides on either hand were alive with enemies, and that their retreat was barred by the Carthaginian cavalry. At the same moment they found themselves attacked, before, says the historian, they could form their lines, or even draw their swords.

The result of this surprise was something like a panic. The march had been conducted

with so much carelessness and disorder that the legions and even the maniples or companies were broken up. It was by the merest chance that a soldier found himself in his proper place, or ranged with his proper comrades. Some, it would seem, were actually without arms, for these were being carried in waggons, and the waggons could not be found when they were wanted. The mist, it must be remembered, though it had cleared away from the higher ground, still lay thick upon the lower ground, which was indeed very little raised above the level of the lake. So it came to pass that, as Livy puts it, the ear was of more service than the eye. The men rushed where they heard the groans of the wounded, the clash of sword upon armour, the cry of victory or defeat. The coward, flying in terror, found himself entangled in the mass of combatants; the brave man, eager to take his part in the struggle, might be irresistibly carried off by a crowd of fugitives.

After a while something of the habitual Roman courage reasserted itself. Every one could see for himself that the army was hemmed in. The mountains were on one side, the lake on the other; at either end of the road the passage was barred by serried lines of the enemy. If there was to be any

deliverance it must come from their own strength and valour. Panic was succeeded by the courage of despair. Nothing could restore to the army its lost order, but it was at least determined to sell its existence dearly. And here, at least, Flaminius did his duty to the utmost. Incompetent as he was as a general, he was the bravest of the brave. "It is not by prayers to heaven," he cried, "that you will escape. Strength and courage, and these alone, will save you. The less your fear, the smaller the danger." The men answered to their leader's call. So fierce was the fight that the combatants were wholly unconscious of an earthquake which, at the very hour when the battle raged most fiercely, laid more than one city in ruins, changed the courses of river, and brought down huge masses of earth and rock from the mountains to the plains.

It was round the person of the Consul that the battle raged most fiercely. He was a conspicuous figure in the scarlet cloak which marked the officer in chief command, and in arms of unusual splendour. And as long as he was in the front the legions held their own. For three hours the issue seemed to be in suspense. But a general who exposes himself as recklessly as the Consul felt constrained to

do can hardly hope to escape. And there were some in the hostile ranks who bore him a special grudge. Five years before Flaminius had carried on a campaign against the Insubrian Gauls,¹ and had treated them, it would seem, with exceptional severity. An Insubrian trooper now recognised him. "This is the man," he cried to his comrades, "who slaughtered our countrymen, and laid waste our fields. I will offer him a sacrifice to the spirits of the dead." So saying, he set spurs to his horse and charged through the Roman line. The Consul's armour-bearer threw himself in the way, and was struck down. The Consul himself fell mortally wounded. A fierce struggle took place over his body, but the Roman veterans succeeded in rescuing it. But to an army that is fighting at a disadvantage the fall of its leader is often a disabling blow. So it was at Lake Trasumennus. The Roman army no longer held its ground. Frantic attempts were made to fly. Some tried to climb the mountain-side; others endeavoured to escape by wading out into the lake. Very few succeeded in either attempt. In the lake, especially, many perished. Those who attempted to swim

¹ Near Mediolanum (*Milan*).

were drowned sooner or later ; those who made their way back to the shore were cut down by the enemy's horsemen, who rode out in the shallow and were ready to receive them. Fifteen thousand in all were slain ; ten thousand contrived to escape. One body of six thousand, possibly a complete legion, succeeded in forcing its way through the defile occupied by Hannibal's troops. But its fate was only delayed for a time. It was without provisions, and without guides. When, the next day, Maharbal with the Carthaginian cavalry appeared, it surrendered. Hannibal's loss was fifteen hundred slain and a very considerable number of wounded. Livy gives these figures on the authority of a contemporary writer, Fabius Pictor.

VII

THE OVERTHROW AT CANNÆ

THE disastrous defeat at Lake Trasimennus was followed by a change of policy at Rome. Quintus Fabius, who was appointed dictator, was as cautious as Flaminius had been rash. His plan was to watch the enemy, to use all the opportunities which a knowledge of the country and the friendly feeling of the population—for Italy remained firmly faithful to Rome—put in his way. To a certain extent he was successful. While he was in command Rome suffered no disasters. But he was, probably, nothing more than an able soldier. He had nothing like the genius of Hannibal, and when he might have struck a really effective blow at the enemy, he allowed himself to be outwitted. And the Romans had not yet thoroughly learnt their lesson. They wearied of the cautious strategy of Fabius which avoided defeat but did not save Italy from

fire and sword. The first result of this revolution of feeling was putting the dictator's second-in-command—"Master of the Horse" was his official title—on an equality with him. Minucius—for this was his name—was an adventurous soldier of the Flaminius type. He had won some slight successes when Fabius had been absent on official business in Rome, and he now hoped to distinguish himself still more. He took charge of half the army, and pitched a camp for himself. It was not long, however, before he was outmanœuvred by the enemy, and reduced to extremities, from which he was saved by the timely arrival of Fabius. But different views of these events prevailed at Rome—and we must remember that we have one side only of the case. It was affirmed that Minucius had been purposely deserted, and that his reverse was due to the intrigues of the aristocrats. Great popular excitement followed, and the result was that when the Consuls of the new year were elected a violent partisan, Terentius Varro by name, was put in office. Varro, though he could scarcely have been as incompetent as we should suppose from Livy's account,¹ had had no military experience. The

¹ He held important commands in subsequent years.

aristocrats succeeded in giving him as a colleague L. Æmilius Paullus, a soldier of some reputation, but unfortunately much disliked by the commons.

Hannibal was now in Apulia, in Southern Italy, where he probably found the population more sympathetic than in the north, the larger Greek element being not yet reconciled to Roman rule. His headquarters were at Cannæ, a town on the right or southern bank of the Aufidus. The Roman army, which was under peremptory instructions from home to fight, had probably followed the *Via Appia* as far as Venusia, and had then marched eastward. A garrison was probably left at Canusium, a strongly fortified town, about six miles to the west of Cannæ. An hour's march from Canusium must have brought them within sight of Hannibal. He was encamped outside Cannæ, the country round him being level and so well adapted for the operations of cavalry, an arm in which he was particularly strong. A difference of opinion now developed itself between the two Consuls. Æmilius Paullus was for drawing the enemy into a country less suited to him; Varro, on the other hand, was impatient to fight at once. He ordered an advance, which resulted in a partial engage-

ment, terminating, on the whole, not unfavourably to the Romans.

The final position taken up by the Consuls was this. Two-thirds of the army was located on the north or left bank of the river, the remainder was left on the south, being very nearly in touch with the Carthaginian outposts. It must be remembered that the Aufidus, a shallow and rapid stream, dwindled in summer to a very inconsiderable river which might be forded anywhere without difficulty, at least in this part of its course. The battle was fought on August 2nd, according to the Roman calendar, but as this was very much in advance of the true time, really in the middle of June, Paullus was for a policy of inactivity. He believed that Hannibal would have to shift his ground for want of supplies, and he hoped that he might find a favourable opportunity for delivering an attack. His colleague, however, had a very different view of the situation. Naturally rash and eager, he was irritated by the aggressive movements of the enemy, who did all that was possible to provoke him. The Roman troops, too, were eager to fight, and they soon had their wish.

It was the custom that when the two Consuls were with the army they should exercise the

command on alternate days. At early dawn on his day of command Varro gave orders to the force encamped on the north bank of the Aufidus to cross the stream. This done he drew out his whole force in a long line fronting the south. He had in all about 80,000 infantry and 6,000 horse. The Roman cavalry he posted on the right wing along the river bank; the right centre consisted of the Roman foot, which was drawn up in deeper and closer formation than usual; the left centre and the left wing were made up of the horse and foot of the allies. The archers and light-armed generally were in advance of the main line. Hannibal posted his Gallic and Spanish cavalry on his left wing, *i.e.*, opposite the Roman horse, and his African horse on the right. Next the mounted troops on either side was a body of African infantry, equipped with armour and weapons collected from the spoils of Trebia and Trasumennus. The centre consisted of Gauls and Spaniards. Livy speaks of the imposing effect of their stature, for physically these Celtic warriors were greatly superior to their Italian antagonists, and of their general appearance. The Gauls were naked to the waist, the Spaniards clad in linen vests, of dazzling whiteness, edged with purple. In numbers

Hannibal was greatly inferior, having only 40,000 infantry. For this disadvantage he was partly compensated by the superiority of his cavalry, both in numbers and efficiency. Of this arm he had no less than 10,000. Livy tells us, though Polybius does not mention the circumstance, that a strong wind from the S.E., locally known as the Volturnus, carrying with it clouds of sand, blew into the faces of the Romans, and greatly incommoded them.

The battle began, as usual, with some indecisive skirmishing between the light-armed troops on either side. The Gallic and Spanish cavalry, on the contrary, soon achieved a very decided success. There was little room for the display of tactics or even for a charge. The combatants came to close quarters, and here the great personal strength of the Celts gave them an advantage. They dismounted and dragged their antagonists from their horses. A valiant resistance was made; it was not till many had been slain in this fierce struggle that any sought safety in flight.

The legionary infantry did not fail to assert its superiority in discipline and effective equipment over the Gallic and Spanish foot opposed to it. The latter fought with conspicuous courage, but failed to bear up against the

weight and the orderly advance of the heavy-armed Romans. Had there been a cool-headed soldier in command at this point the success of the legions might have been turned to excellent advantage. Wanting capable leadership it ended in disaster. The pursuit was carried far beyond the point at which, in view of the fact that the cavalry had been driven off the field, prudence would have stopped it. The legions, while they followed the flying Celts, were themselves assailed on either flank by the African contingents, made on this occasion more formidable by the fact that they had a Roman equipment of armour and weapons. Already disordered by their hasty advance, they were still further broken by this attack. But though the line ceased to exist, many of the companies preserved their formation, and, for a time, the conflict was carried on under fairly equal conditions. A brilliant charge by the Carthaginian cavalry under Hasdrubal ¹ decided the day. He had led his Celtic host in the fierce conflict with the Romans, had afterwards helped the Numidians to beat the allies, and he now threw himself

¹ Not to be identified with any other officer of the same name, for, strangely enough, he is not mentioned on any other occasion.

with his victorious squadrons on the rear of the Roman legions. After this there was but little more resistance offered, and the battle became a massacre. Rome never suffered a more frightful loss than she did on the fatal day of Cannæ. Of the 80,000 men whom she brought into the field only three or four thousand escaped. The number of the slain is put by Polybius at 70,000; Livy gives a much smaller figure (40,000), but Polybius is the most trustworthy authority. Many prisoners were taken, some in the camps which they had been left to guard, some at Cannæ, where they vainly sought refuge. Only those who had the wisdom or good fortune to make their way to Canusium found themselves in safety. Varro, with some seventy troopers, escaped to Venusia. Æmilius Paullus died upon the field. Livy tells a pathetic story of his end, which may well be true, though Polybius does not mention it.¹ It runs thus :—

One Lentulus, a military tribune, found the Consul sitting on a stone, covered with blood.

¹ His silence is certainly remarkable because he was certainly acquainted with Paullus' son, and was on terms of intimate friendship with his grandson. (The younger Scipio was a son of the Æmilius Paullus who conquered Macedonia, and was adopted by a son of the elder Scipio.)

He offered him his horse. They might both escape. He was himself unwounded and could help his chief. "Do not add," he went on, "to the other disasters of the day the death of a Consul. There will be tears and mourning enough without that." Paullus refused the offer. "Do not waste," he said, "in useless pity your own opportunity of escape. Go and tell the Senate from me to make Rome as strong as possible against the arrival of the victorious enemy. As to me, let me die here in the midst of my slaughtered soldiers. I do not wish again to be brought to trial or to prove my own innocence by accusing my colleague." Here a crowd of fugitives, followed close by the enemy, swept over them. Lentulus escaped, thanks to the swiftness of his horse. The Consul, whom the pursuers did not recognise, was slain.

Paullus, it will have been seen, is represented as anticipating the immediate advance of Hannibal against Rome. The question whether that advance should have been made has, we might say, been discussed ever since; Livy tells us that Hannibal was strongly urged by his own lieutenants to take this step. Maharbal, who was one of the ablest among them, declared that if he would but start at once he



THE OVERTHROW AT CANNÆ.



should be feasting in the Capitol in four days' time ; and when Hannibal refused to follow his advice, added, " I see that the gods do not give all things to one man. You know how to win a victory, but you do not know how to use it."

It is impossible, of course, to speak with confidence on such a subject. That Hannibal was thoroughly competent to judge of the situation from a soldier's point of view must be conceded. Nor is it difficult to see that, victorious as he had been, his available force must have been greatly reduced. His loss in killed is said to have been 6,000. The proportion of wounded in ancient warfare was far smaller than that which prevails under modern conditions. Still we must make a considerable addition if we would reckon the total of the disabled. He had about 55,000 on the morning of the battle, and could hardly have been able to put more than 30,000 in the fighting line at its close. He thought it better, under the circumstances, to wait for the results of his victory on those who both within and without Italy were watching the course of the war. These were not inconsiderable, but they were not as decisive as might have been expected. And Hannibal seems to have con-

tinued to hope for developments which never occurred. Perhaps we may say that it would have been wise to have abandoned the Italian campaign, if, six months after Cannæ, he still felt himself unable to march on Rome. This is one of the questions upon which the most sagacious of men and the ablest of generals may be mistaken. To abandon Italy would have been to give up the dream of his life, and to this Hannibal could not bring himself, even after it must have become evident to his cooler judgment that Rome was not to be vanquished.

VIII

THE SECRET MARCH

THE result of the victory of Cannæ, stated broadly, was that the southern half of Italy threw in its lot with Hannibal. The Samnites, in former days the fiercest and most dangerous enemies of Rome ; the Campanians, a warlike race whose name has occurred more than once in my story, and who possessed in Capua the second city of Italy ; the Greek region, far less populous and wealthy than it had once been, but still formidable, and the aboriginal mountain tribes of Bruttium declared against Rome. Northern Italy, however, remained faithful, and even the disaffected territories were more or less held in check by the colonies, Latin as well as Roman, for the Latins were firm in their allegiance.¹ On the

¹ A colony, I may remind my readers, was practically a military outpost. It was inhabited by old soldiers to whom

whole the effect of the disaster was not so absolutely crushing as might have been expected. Hannibal's most noteworthy gain during the remainder of the year was the accession of Capua. Rome had the profound relief of feeling that the worst was over, and that she still existed. This relief was expressed in a truly characteristic way when the Senate voted thanks to Varro "because he had not despaired of the Republic." To Varro, indeed, no thanks were due; he had done nothing more than save his own life; what the resolution really expressed was that Rome had survived what might well have been an annihilating blow.

land had been granted. There were two classes of colonies, Roman and Latin, as there were two kinds of citizenship, Roman and Latin. Livy has an interesting passage about the behaviour of the Latin colonies in the year 209. There were thirty in all. Twelve of these declared themselves to be unable to comply with the requisitions for men and money made upon them. The other eighteen expressed themselves in an opposite sense, as willing to do even more than was asked of them. Among these we find Brundisium, Luceria, Venusium, Paestum, and Beneventum, all important places in the region generally occupied by Hannibal. Livy goes so far as to say that it was their support that was the salvation of Rome. "After all these years they must not be forgotten or deprived of the praise which they so well deserved."

The next two years (215-214) passed without any event of great importance. One serious danger, indeed, threatened Rome, but it passed away. At Syracuse, Hiero, who had been a steady friend for nearly fifty years, had been succeeded by his grandson, Hieronymus, a foolish lad, who was under Carthaginian influence. In Macedonia Philip V. made up his mind to give active help to Hannibal. But Hieronymus was assassinated before he could do anything, and Philip, for reasons which we do not know, let the opportunity pass. In 213 Tarentum fell into the hands of Hannibal, though the citadel was held by a Roman garrison. In 212 the Carthaginians won a great victory at Herdonia in Apulia, wholly destroying a Roman army, and got possession of some important towns in Southern Italy. They had also a great success in Spain, where two Roman armies were defeated with the loss of their commanders, Cnæus and Publius Scipio. On the other hand, Rome recovered Syracuse, which was taken by Marcellus after a siege of nearly two years' duration. Hard pressed as she was in other directions she thus accomplished what Athens and Carthage, both at the height of their power, had failed to do. And Capua was

invested ; nor could Hannibal, victorious as he was in the field, relieve it. Much, it is evident, turned on the fate of Capua. No Italian city would venture to take up the Carthaginian cause if this important place could not be protected. In 210, accordingly, Hannibal made a vigorous effort to relieve it. In the hope of compelling the Consuls to raise the siege, he threatened Rome itself, and advanced to within three miles of the city. He even rode up with a body of cavalry to the walls. But he failed to achieve his purpose. One of the Consuls led his army from before Capua to the relief of the capital, but the other still pressed the siege. Hannibal retreated, and though he turned upon the Consul, who was following him somewhat carelessly, and defeated him with very heavy loss, he could not relieve Capua. This city capitulated before the end of the year. In 209 Hannibal won another great battle on the same spot, Herdonia, where he had triumphed two years before. In the field, it will be seen, he was always successful, but he could not be everywhere, nor could he protect all his Italian allies. In this year the two important regions of Samnium and Lucania gave in their submission to Rome,

which had the wisdom to grant them favourable terms. And Tarentum was lost, betrayed to the Romans, as it had been betrayed a few years before to Hannibal. The next year (208) was marked by the death of the consul Marcellus, and by other Carthaginian successes. In 207 we came to another great crisis of the war, the attempt of Hasdrubal to join his brother, ending in the decisive battle of the Metaurus.

We last heard of Hasdrubal as defeating the two Scipios in 212. What hindered him from following up this success by an immediate march into Italy it is impossible to say. Livy's account of the transactions of the next five years is wholly incredible, and Polybius' narrative is lost. It is rash to pronounce a judgment where we know so little of the facts. Still it is generally true that few commanders have the same power of perspective which Hannibal seems to have possessed. It is at least possible that Hasdrubal may have overrated the importance of what he might be able to do in Spain, and have forgotten that the war had really to be decided in Italy. It is a fact that he put off his advance in Italy for four years, and that when he made it his general prospects

had not improved. A very able young commander, afterwards known as Scipio Africanus, had appeared upon the scene, and had achieved the great success of capturing New Carthage. This he followed up in 209 by defeating Hasdrubal himself. This defeat, however, did not prevent the Carthaginian general from carrying out his original plan. Either in this year or in the next he crossed the Pyrenees. He spent a considerable time in Gaul, where he was able to enlist a large number of recruits, and, after an easy passage of the Alps, descended into Italy early in the year 207. And here, again, we find him neglecting, as far as we can see, the main issue, and wasting strength and time on a quite subordinate matter. He besieged Placentia, a strongly fortified colony, and so gave the Romans time to recover from the surprise of his unexpectedly early arrival. By the time he had made up his mind to raise the siege of Placentia, one of the Consuls, Livius by name, had advanced to bar his way.

The Roman generals must have been aware that the main object of Hasdrubal's descent into Italy was to effect a junction with his brother. And now, by a lucky chance, they found out how this was to be done. Has-

drubal sent a party of six horsemen charged with a letter to his brother, in which he announced his arrival in Italy, and suggested that they should meet in Umbria. These messengers traversed nearly the whole of Italy in safety, only to fail at the last. When they were some thirty or forty miles from Metapontum, where Hannibal was encamped, they took the wrong road, and made for Tarentum. They fell into the hands of a foraging party, and were brought before the officer who was in local command. To him they confessed, under threats of torture, that they carried despatches to Hannibal. The officer sent them on to the Consul Nero, who was watching Hannibal. Nero at once conceived a bold design. The junction of the two Carthaginian armies must be prevented at any cost, and the best means of doing this would be to strengthen the army of the north, and crush Hasdrubal before he could unite his forces with his brother's. But there was no time to be lost. Nero picked seven thousand men out of his army, the very best troops that he had, and hurried northwards. No one knew of his plan; even the authorities at Rome were hoodwinked. Nor did he hamper himself with transport. He would be passing through a

friendly population, and he judged it sufficient to send messengers before him with directions that ready-cooked provisions should be brought down for the use of the army, with such horses as would suffice to carry what was absolutely necessary. Everything turned out well. The soldiers made forced marches of extraordinary length, and reached their journey's end without mishap, entering the camp at night, as it was desirable to keep their coming a secret. This, however, was not effectually done. Hasdrubal had at least some suspicion of what had happened. Riding up to the Roman camp, he observed some shields of unfamiliar pattern. Some of the horses were leaner than those he had seen before, and there were, as he thought, more of them. Another suspicious circumstance was one for which he had been on the lookout. There were, it should be explained, two Roman camps, one in charge of the Consul Livius, the other commanded by the prætor Porcius. In the Consul's camp the signal was sounded twice, indicating that both consuls were there. On the other hand there was the perplexing circumstance that the limits of the camps had not been extended. If a large reinforcement had arrived, where could they have been put away? Above all, was it

possible that a general so consummately skilful as Hannibal had allowed such a manœuvre to be made? Or was it possible that Hannibal had been destroyed? The general result of these questionings was great discouragement. He declined the battle which the Consuls, who had made up their minds to fight without delay, offered him as soon as possible after Nero's arrival, and in the course of the following night struck his camp and moved away. It is not easy to say what was his object in thus retreating, for a northward movement was a retreat, the Metaurus river, which he wished to cross, being some miles to the north of his camp. Possibly he wished to get to a region where the population would be friendly. Anyhow, the movement ended in disaster. Two guides whom he had pressed into his service contrived to disappear in the night-march, and the ford of the Metaurus could not be discovered. The army proceeded slowly up the right bank of the river. It was a fatiguing march; many men fell out, and all were wearied and dispirited. Early in the next day the Roman army came up, and Hasdrubal saw that he must fight. He posted his elephants as usual in front of the centre, with the Ligurians behind them. On the right were

his Spanish troops, veteran soldiers of his own, and of the very best quality. These were under his personal command. The Gauls were on the left, but seem to have taken but little part in the battle that followed. The Spaniards acquitted themselves in a way worthy of their military reputation, and maintained the struggle for some time on equal terms. The result of the day was in a great measure decided by a bold movement of Nero. He judged that he might safely neglect the Gauls, who were his special antagonists, and wheeling rapidly from the left, fell upon the enemy with crushing effect. The elephants behaved as usual. Formidable at first, they threw the lines of the enemy into disorder; then becoming unmanageable did not less damage to their friends. Livy says that more were killed by their drivers than by the enemy. The battle was long and fierce. So much is amply testified by the amount of the Roman loss. No less than eight thousand men were slain, a very large proportion, it is certain, of the number engaged. The Carthaginian army, of course, suffered more. Probably few of the Spanish troops survived. Some of the Ligurians escaped, and many of the Gauls. They were not far from their own country, and the Romans

were probably too much exhausted to make an energetic pursuit. "Let some be left alive," said the Consul Livius, when he was urged to follow the Gauls, "to carry home accounts of the enemy's losses, and of our valour." These could hardly have been his real reasons. But the total loss in killed and prisoners is put at sixty thousand. Hasdrubal fell in the battle. As long as there was any hope of victory he had done his best, reforming the line again and again, encouraging the wearied, and putting fresh spirit into the discouraged. When all was lost, he set spurs to his horse and charged the enemy's line. Seven days afterwards his head was thrown among the advanced guards of Hannibal's camp.

IX

HANNIBAL'S LAST BATTLE

WHAT Hannibal proposed to himself by remaining in Italy after the disastrously decisive day of the Metaurus it is not easy to say. Perhaps he continued to hope against hope that the great anti-Roman combination, for which he had been working for more than ten years, might yet come into being. To us, who know what Rome became in after days, it seems strange indeed that the kingdoms which she was destined to crush one after another should not have joined with Carthage in the attempt to destroy her. If Macedonia, Syria, and Egypt could have combined while Hannibal had still a footing in Italy, she could hardly have survived. But they were too jealous of each other, or too short-sighted. Possibly they were unwilling to make Carthage, which the Greeks had no reason to love, too

powerful. And what was not done after Cannæ would hardly be attempted after the Metaurus. Anyhow, Hannibal remained in Italy for four years after Hasdrubal's death. He now held only the extreme south of the Peninsula, and the limits of the region which he occupied were slowly contracted by the loss of town after town. Still he clung to his position ; he could have gone at any time ; but he could not bear to give up the dominating hope of his life, and he lingered on. At last, late in the year 203, in obedience to an urgent summons from home, he embarked his army. No attempt was made to hinder him. The Romans indeed were unfeignedly glad to see his departure. They had lost three hundred thousand men during the fifteen years of his stay. The huge dragon of his dream had indeed desolated Italy. It is said that when he took his last look of the land where he had met with such successes and such disappointments, he bitterly reproached his countrymen for the grudging support which they had given him. "It is not the Roman people, so often routed in the field, it is Hanno"—the leader of the Peace party in Carthage—"that has vanquished me." The charge can hardly have been true ; but it is natural to one who

had finally to abandon one of the most splendid schemes that man ever devised. Livy adds that Hannibal now bitterly regretted that he had not led his troops against Rome immediately after the great victory of Cannæ.

It is needless to dwell on the events that followed Hannibal's return to Africa. We have not, indeed, the means of drawing out a quite clear and consistent narrative of them. The romantic story in which Syphax, Masinissa, and Sophonisba (daughter of Hasdrubal, son of Gisco) play the chief parts, does not belong to my subject, and I pass on at once to the battle of Zama.

Hannibal ranged his elephants, as usual, in front of his line. Immediately behind them were the mercenaries, a mixed multitude, to whom Polybius applies the famous verse in which Homer describes the many-tongued battle-cry of the Trojans and their allies. Behind these mercenaries were the native Carthaginians, brought once more into the field by the extremity of their country, and in the rear of all, as a reserve which in the last resort might restore the fortunes of the day, the veterans whom Hannibal had brought with him from Italy. Scipio departed in one particular from

the usual rules of Roman tactics. Usually the intervals in the front line were filled up in the second, and the intervals in the second filled up in the third. On the present occasion the intervals were continuous, giving a free passage from the front of the army to the rear. This was done with a view to lessening the danger from the elephants. For the same reason the space between the lines was made greater than usual. The more space these animals were allowed in which they might move, the less likely, Scipio thought, they would be to trample down the ranks of his men. Lælius with the Roman cavalry occupied the left wing, with the native Carthaginian horse opposed to him ; Masinissa on the right had a body of African horse fronting men of the same or kindred nationalities in the service of Carthage. The elephants were of even less use and did even more damage to their friends than usual. The stock of trained animals had been long since exhausted, and the untaught creatures now brought into the field were unmanageable. In this instance they turned against the Carthaginian cavalry, and put them into such disorder that Lælius won an easy victory over them. On the Roman right Masinissa, one of the best cavalry officers that the world has

ever seen, defeated his antagonists. But in the centre the victory was less easily won. The mercenaries were veteran soldiers skilled in all the arts of war, and they more than held their own against the Roman infantry, largely consisting of recruits. If they had been properly backed up by the Carthaginians behind them, they might have changed the fortunes of the day. But the citizen soldiers remained stolidly in their places. It was only when they were themselves attacked—the mercenaries, we are told, enraged at being thus deserted, turned against them—that they drew their swords. The line of veterans, under Hannibal's personal command, made a fierce and obstinate resistance. It was only when they were charged on both flanks by the victorious cavalry that they gave way. After this the rout was general. Twenty thousand men were left dead on the field of battle, and as many more were taken prisoners. Of the conquerors fifteen hundred fell. It was not a high price to pay for the victory that, as Polybius puts it, "gave to Rome the sovereignty of the world." Hannibal made his way to Adrumetum, and from thence to Carthage with a body of six thousand troops.

The terms of peace were unexpectedly

lenient. Carthage was to retain its independence, and its African possessions. But it was to pay an annual tribute of two hundred talents and an indemnity of ten thousand, and it was to retain only ten ships of war. Hannibal was so strongly impressed with the necessity of accepting these terms that he forcibly pulled back into his seat a senator who had risen to speak against them.

A few lines may be given to the after history of this remarkable man, the most formidable enemy that Rome ever had, equally great as statesman and as general.

Not long after the conclusion of peace he left Carthage, avoiding by his voluntary departure a demand that Rome was preparing to make for his extradition. He was suspected, and probably with justice, of still cherishing hostile designs. He took refuge with Antiochus, of Syria, surnamed, but not for very convincing reasons, the Great. Antiochus was flattered by his presence, but showed a ridiculous jealousy of his genius. He would not employ him or even take his advice. A combination against Rome among the Eastern powers was still possible, and Hannibal strongly urged that it should be made, but he urged it in vain. In 192 he was indeed put in command of the

Syrian fleet, largely consisting, it may be presumed, of Phœnician ships. He was attacked by a superior force from Rhodes, then the greatest naval power in the world, and was defeated. Two years afterwards the great battle of Magnesia was fought. Whether Hannibal was present we do not know, but he was certainly not in command. Possibly an anecdote that is told of him belongs to this time. King Antiochus showed him his army, splendid with gold and silver. "Will not this be enough for the Romans?" asked the king. "Yes, indeed," answered the veteran, "though they are the greediest people upon earth." But it was of the value of their spoils, not of the efficiency of their weapons, that he was thinking. The battle ended in the total defeat of Antiochus and his splendid army. Two years later he made peace with Rome, one of the conditions being that he should banish from his dominions all the enemies of Rome. Hannibal had anticipated the decree. He visited various places, and found at last what promised to be a final refuge with Prusias, King of Bithynia. But Prusias quarrelled with a neighbour, Eumenes, King of Pergamum, and Eumenes was a friend of Rome. Rome sent to Prusias to demand the person of his guest, and the

veteran—he was now in his sixty-fifth year—took poison. He carried the drug about with him in a ring, so the story runs, to be used in such an emergency.

X

THE BLOTTING OUT OF CARTHAGE

FOR fifty years after the conclusion of the Peace of Hannibal, as the treaty described in my last chapter came to be called, Carthage and Rome continued to live on uneasy terms of mutual suspicion. Rome dreaded the rapid recovery in power and wealth of her old enemy ; Carthage feared, and doubtless with more reason, the inextinguishable hatred of the State which she had once brought so near to destruction. The conditions imposed after Zama had not prevented the accumulation of wealth in the vanquished city. Her commerce had been left her untouched ; commerce meant a full treasury, and it was with her treasury that Carthage had always made war. There were two men who had much to do with embittering this quarrel, though neither of them lived to see the end which they desired.

Of one of these two, Masinissa, I have already had occasion to speak. He was the son of a Numidian king, and in early life had been an energetic ally of Carthage. He served in the Spanish campaigns of Hasdrubal (brother of Hannibal) with a strong contingent of Numidian horsemen. Even the defeat of the Metaurus did not shake his loyalty. In the following year, however, he began to think of changing sides, and he finally came to an agreement with Scipio that he would do his best to help the Roman cause, when the war should have been transferred to Africa. He had strong personal motives for this change. He had been deprived of the succession to his father's kingdom by the action of Syphax, a neighbouring potentate who was in close alliance with Carthage, and he had also seen his promised wife, Sophonisba (daughter of Hasdrubal Gisco), given to the same rival. Such then were the causes which made him a prominent actor in the battle of Zama. The Peace of Hannibal left Masinissa in undisputed possession of his hereditary dominions, increased by the kingdom of Syphax. For the next fifty years he was perpetually on the watch to aggrandise himself at the expense of Carthage. Again and again he seized some

desirable region belonging to that State, was met with protests which he uniformly disregarded, and was sustained in his usurpation by Rome, whose commissioners were secretly instructed, we are told, to favour so useful an ally. In 150 B.C. these continual feuds ended in open war. Masinissa, who was still vigorous and active, though he had reached his eighty-eighth year, defeated the Carthaginians in a pitched battle. Two years afterwards he died.

The other persistent enemy of Carthage was M. Porcius Cato, commonly known as Cato the Censor or Cato the Elder. Born in 234 B.C., Cato was just of an age to serve in the army when Hannibal invaded Italy. We do not know whether he was present at any of the great battles, but he was certainly aide-de-camp to Fabius at the siege of Tarentum in 209. He never forgot the scenes which he witnessed when Hannibal was ravaging Italy; and when he had risen to a high place in the State, he devoted himself to obtaining what he considered a satisfactory vengeance. He lost no opportunity of impressing upon his countrymen his conviction that Carthage should not be permitted to exist. It is related of him that whatever the question before the Senate might

be, he would add to his opinion,¹ "and I also think that Carthage ought to be blotted out." He died in 149 B.C., in his eighty-fifth year.

It was in this year that the Third Punic War commenced. Cato had succeeded, it would seem, in the great object of his life. Rome was determined that Carthage should be blotted out. It is probable, indeed, that other motives besides the national and political were at work. The commercial interest was very powerful in Rome, and to this interest the destruction of a successful rival, which had long commanded most of the markets of the Mediterranean coast, seemed most desirable.² Anyhow, the terms proposed when the Carthaginian envoys were introduced into the Senate at Rome were such that it was manifest that war was determined upon. When the first conditions, onerous as they were, were accepted, then fresh severities were added. The ultima-

¹ The presiding magistrate put the question to every senator in turn.

² The influence of the commercial party may be seen in the destruction of Corinth in the same year that saw the fall of Carthage; for the policy followed in the case of Carthage many reasons could be given, but the destruction of Corinth was certainly indefensible. No one could pretend that it would ever be dangerous to Rome. The act was one of commercial jealousy pure and simple.

tum was that the Carthaginians must give up their city to be destroyed. They would themselves be spared, and might retain a portion of their property, but their new habitation must not be within ten miles of the sea. This was meant to be impossible, and it had the effect which was desired. When the envoys returned and related the terms which had been finally imposed, the popular fury burst out. Those who had been prominent in advising the negotiations for peace were massacred, and the envoys themselves shared their fate. The Senate, in the face of such a demonstration, could but come to one decision. It declared war against Carthage.

It is needless to tell in detail the events of the two first two campaigns. The Romans led, it would seem, by incompetent generals, were not so successful as had been expected, and by the close of the summer of 147 little or no progress had been made. In fact, the Romans were rather worse off than when they began. Their African allies began to doubt whether they had chosen the right side. Masinissa's sons in particular were wavering. They hardly knew, indeed, what to wish. If Carthage were to fall into the hands of Rome, - their own turn would soon come. Probably the best thing that could happen would be to have a feeble

Carthage, not able to oppress its neighbours, but still preserving an independent existence as a "buffer-state" between themselves and Rome.

Then with the appointment of the younger Scipio¹ to the supreme command of the armies in Africa a great change came over the scene. He had been serving as a Military Tribune (about equivalent in rank to a Brigadier-General), and had distinguished himself by his courage and intelligence. When the elections in Rome came on he went home, nominally to stand for the *Ædileship*, but probably with higher views. He was thirty-seven years of age, and so five years under the legal age for the *Consulship*. But to the *Consulship* he was elected. The presiding officer protested in vain. The people would have it so, and the president yielded. And when the ballot for provinces took place, Scipio's colleague yielded again, and Africa, to which indeed he seemed to have an hereditary right, was assigned to him.

¹ The younger Scipio was the grandson by adoption, and the nephew by marriage, of the Elder Scipio. He was the son of L. *Æmilius Paullus*, and was adopted by the Elder Scipio's son *Publius*, whose feeble health had prevented him from taking any part in public life. *Publius's* mother was a sister of *Æmilius Paullus*, and therefore aunt of the younger Scipio by blood and grandmother by adoption.

He sailed at once for Carthage, and began by rescuing one of the generals who were about to be superseded from a dangerous position into which his imprudence had led him. Then he set the affairs of the army in order. The camp was cleared of a crowd of idlers, soldiers' servants, sutlers, and dealers. Then active operations were begun. A suburb of the city, called Megara, where the wealthier citizens had their homes, was taken. It was soon relinquished, indeed, for it was found too costly to keep, but this success led to the abandonment of the camp which had been fortified outside the walls, and which was the first line of defence. The city was now almost invested. On the land side the blockade was complete, and no more supplies could be introduced ; and now Scipio began to block up the mouth of the harbour. But here the besieged foiled him. They built a fleet of fifty ships, and they dug a new channel from the inner harbour to the open sea. The Romans were taken by surprise. They had no idea that a fleet was being built, and they saw it for the first time when it issued from a harbour which was also a new creation. If the Carthaginians had acted at once, for they found the Roman fleet wholly unprepared for action, they might at least postponed the end.

But they contented themselves with a demonstration. A day or two after there was a drawn battle between the two fleets, but when the conflict was renewed on the morrow, the advantage rested with Rome. But the resources of the besieged were not exhausted. An attack was made on the city on the land-side, and battering-rams were brought up to the walls. But the besieged made a determined sally, drove back the assailants, and burnt their engines. During the winter Scipio busied himself with cutting off the supplies that the city still received from the interior. He also routed an army of native allies which had been gathered for its relief.

In 146 the siege was pressed with renewed vigour. The harbour of the warships and the Lower City were occupied after a feeble resistance. Then the Upper City was attacked. The struggle here was long and fierce; the houses had to be taken one by one. Each was obstinately defended, in each many non-combatants perished. This was kept on for seven days and nights. The Romans fought in relief parties; but Scipio never rested. He snatched such food and sleep as chance threw in his way, and was never absent from his post of leader. At last nothing but the citadel was

left. A deputation was sent to Scipio offering to surrender on the single condition that the lives of the prisoners should be spared. Scipio granted this prayer, but excepted the deserters. Fifty thousand men, women, and children availed themselves of the conqueror's mercy, and gave themselves up. Only Hasdrubal and his family, his chief officers, and the deserters were left. The citadel was impregnable, but it could be reduced by hunger. Then Hasdrubal contrived to escape from his companions, and creeping into the presence of Scipio, begged for his life. This was granted, not because the suppliant deserved any mercy, but because he could make himself useful to the conqueror. A tragic scene followed. Hasdrubal's wife had observed with disgust her husband's pusillanimity. Leading her two children by the hand, she advanced to the front of the wall. For Scipio she had no reproaches, but on her husband she invoked every curse that she had at her command. Then she stabbed her children, threw them into the flames, for the deserters, resolved not to fall into Roman hands, had set fire to the citadel, and followed them herself. By the express orders of the Senate, but against the wishes of Scipio, the whole city was burnt. He is said to have burst

into tears as he looked on the conflagration, after repeating the well-known lines from the Iliad (vi. 417-8), in which the great champion of Troy foretells the doom of the city.

“The day wherein Ilium the holy shall perish, will come ;
it is near
Unto Priam withal, and the folk of the king of the ashen
spear.”

BOOK V

ROME AND THE BARBARIANS. THE RISE

I. THE DAY OF ALLIA

ONE Roman historian tells us that his countrymen believed that while their valour could easily overcome all other dangers, a contest with the Gauls must be for existence and not for fame ; another remarks that the Senate never neglected any tidings that might reach it of a movement among this people. For such movements there was a special name,¹ and a special reserve of treasure was laid up in the Capitol to be employed when this particular danger threatened the State. There were Gauls, as the classical atlas tells us, on either side of the Alps. The tribes that dwelt south of the Alps were unquiet neighbours to the

¹ *Tumultus*.

Latin nations, but the real danger arose when a swarm of invaders from beyond the mountains, moved by the love of adventure, or driven by famine, descended on the fertile plains of Northern Italy. The first invasion of which we have any detailed account took place in the early part of the fourth century B.C.

The true story of this event has, as usual, been not a little overgrown with legend. It was said that the Gauls, under their king Brennus, were induced to attack the Etrurian town of Clusium by one of its citizens, who hoped thus to avenge a private injury inflicted by a powerful noble who could not be reached by the law.¹ The inhabitants, alarmed by the formidable appearance of the invading host, sent envoys to Rome begging for help. Livy tells us that there was no alliance between the two towns. All that the Clusines could plead was that they had remained neutral in the long war between Rome and Veii, an Etrurian town, which it would have been natural to help. The Romans sent

¹ A very similar story is told of the coming of the Moors into Spain. It is quite possible that in both cases the invaders may have received help, in the way of guidance or information, from some one who had an injury to avenge; but the national movement itself must have had some deeper and more powerful cause,

envoys to the Gauls, three brothers belonging to the Fabian house (not a very likely thing, one would imagine), with a message to this effect : "Clusium is a friendly State ; we must help it even by force of arms, if that should be necessary, when it is wantonly attacked. But we wish to avoid war if it is possible. Let the Gauls explain what they want." The Gallic leaders replied that they too preferred to be on good terms with the Romans, who, from the fact that their help had thus been asked, were evidently brave men. What they wanted from the Clusines was a portion of land. They had more than they could use, whereas the Gauls had none. The Roman envoys made an indignant reply. "By what right do you demand land from its lawful possessors ; what have you Gauls to do with an Etrurian town ?" "Our rights," said the Gauls, "is in the point of our swords ; as for property, all things belong to the brave." The conference broke up, and both parties prepared for battle. In the conflict that ensued the brothers Fabii took a prominent part. So conspicuous was their valour that it could not but be noticed both by friend and foe ; one of them in particular was recognised as he was stripping the arms from a Gallic chieftain whom he had slain in single combat.

The Gauls now suspended all hostilities against Clusium. They were bent on demanding satisfaction from Rome for this gross offence against the law of nations. The more impetuous spirits were for marching against the offending city, but the older and more prudent counsellors prevailed when they suggested that envoys should be sent to represent their wrongs, and to claim redress. The envoys came, and were heard by the Senate, which acknowledged the transgression of the Fabii, but hesitated to accede to the demand that the guilty should be given up. Unable or unwilling to come to a decision, they referred the matter to the General Assembly of the People. Here there was little chance of justice being done. The proposition that these brave nobles should be given up was at once scouted. The Fabii's were not only not punished, but were actually elected Military Tribunes¹ for the

¹ These officers, "Military Tribunes with Consular power," to give their full title, were sometimes elected in place of the two Consuls. According to Livy this was done nearly fifty times between the years 445-367 B.C. The arrangement had its origin in the difficulty between the patricians and the plebeians. The former could not reconcile themselves to the ideas of a plebeian consul. After the reconciliation of the two orders by the compromise known as the *Licinian Rogations*, it was not done again.

ensuing year. No one thought of the step usually taken in an emergency, the appointment of the ablest soldier available as dictator. Even the ordinary preparations for meeting a formidable enemy were neglected.

Meanwhile the Gauls were advancing on Rome, thinking of nothing but vengeance on this insolent city. The appearance of their host terrified the inhabitants of the country through which they passed, but they did not turn aside to attack or plunder any of the towns on their route. They gave it to be understood that all their quarrel was with Rome.

Roused at length to a sense of their danger by the frequent messengers who came hurrying in from the north the Romans hastily got together such troops as they could find, and marched out to meet the enemy, who had now advanced as far as the river Allia, little more than eleven miles from the city. Livy tells us that the generals formed no camp, constructed no rampart to protect them in case of a reverse, and offered no sacrifice. The battle-line had to be widely extended if they were to be protected against a flanking movement; but this could not be done without perilously weakening

the centre. It mattered, however, little or nothing what arrangements were or were not made. There was nothing like a battle; only a blind* panic and headlong flight. "No lives," says Livy, "were lost in battle." But thousands were cut down in the pursuit, while the fugitives, so densely packed was the throng, hindered each other from escaping; many perished on the Tiber bank, where they stood helpless, the enemy behind, the impassable stream in front; not a few were drowned, some who, unable to swim, yet threw themselves into the stream, in the wild hope of somehow struggling through, or, being swimmers, were weighed down by their heavy armour. Of those who escaped the greater part made their way to Veii. These neglected to send any tidings of their safety to Rome. Those who reached Rome did not even stop to shut the gates of the city, but hurried to take possession of the Capitol.

All this sounds very romantic, not to say improbable. It is strange to find these barbarous Gauls so strict in demanding an observance of international laws. And then the battle—there was, indeed, nothing Roman about it. Where were the three Fabii, all in high command, whose valour had been so

conspicuous at Clusium, but on the Allia are unable either to rally their soldiers or to strike a blow for themselves? And the sacrifices—is it credible that so regular a custom, observed almost mechanically, was for this one occasion omitted? And the behaviour of the fugitives—what could be more unlikely? If they were in too great a hurry to shut the city gates, were there no old men or boys to do it? Livy manifestly piles up every possible neglect or misdoing to heighten the dramatic contrast between reckless pride and humiliating defeat. But that a great disaster occurred at the Allia, it is impossible to doubt. Allia was, indeed, as Virgil calls it, *infaustum nomen*, an ill-starred name. For centuries afterwards its anniversary, the 15th of July, *Dies Alliensis*, was marked as one on which no public business could be transacted. When Tacitus wishes to describe the height of reckless impiety in Vitellius, one of the short-lived Emperors who succeeded one another after the fall of the Julian Cæsars, he says that he was so regardless of all law, human or divine, that he actually published an edict on the fatal Day of Allia.

The story goes on in the same romantic style. But a sudden change comes over the

whole temper of the nation, from the highest to the lowest. Impiety, recklessness, and cowardice give place to reverence, prudence, and constancy. The Capitol, the last hope of Rome, is to be held by its picked warriors. No one is to consume its scanty stores who cannot contribute his full share to its defence. The populace obey without a murmur, and flock out of the city, seeking a refuge where they may, or remain to await their doom. The old nobles who have borne high office, consuls, prætors, and senators, will not leave the city but will abide, each in his robes of office and chair of state, the coming of the foe ; the holy things from temple and shrine are either buried or conveyed to some place of safety. Now all is dignity as before all was disgrace.

The story goes on in the same romantic style—the venerable old men, treated at first with reverence, are slaughtered when one of them resents with a blow of his ivory sceptre a barbarian's too familiar touch. The Capitol is closely invested, resolutely defended, but almost lost by the carelessness of the sentries. The besiegers had either observed the track of one of the messengers who had carried some communication from the garrison to the outer

world, or had discovered the place where the ascent was not too difficult to attempt. They make the venture one moonlight night—one would think that the moonlight would be more of a hindrance than a help—and almost succeed. The watch has neglected its duty ; the very dogs are asleep. But Roman piety saves the last refuge of Rome. There was a flock of sacred geese in the temple of Juno, and these had been not only spared but fed, hard pressed as the garrison had been for food. And now they give warning of the enemy's approach. Manlius, one of the most distinguished veterans in the garrison, for he had been Consul, is roused by their clamour, hurries to the edge of the height, hurls one man down by driving his shield into his face, slays others, and gives the garrison time to assemble.

But though the Capitol is not to be taken by force, it cannot stand out against hunger. Negotiations are opened, for the Gauls have somehow given it to be understood that they are ready to depart if a sufficient price can be paid. A thousand pounds weight of gold is agreed upon for the ransom. As the weighing is going on one of the Romans complains that the weights are unfair. Thereupon the insolent Gaul throws his sword into the scale,

uttering words that were beyond all bearing to a Roman ear, "Woe to the vanquished!"

But the gods will not allow the most pious of nations to suffer this last humiliation. Before the price can be handed over to these insulting barbarians, the greatest of Roman soldiers appears upon the scene, orders scales and gold to be removed, bids the Gauls prepare for conflict, and defeats them, first in the Forum itself, and afterwards at the eighth milestone from Rome, as completely as they had themselves routed the Romans at Allia.

We need not endeavour to disentangle the true from the false in this story. That Roman pride covered a humiliating fall is plain enough, and we may well doubt the too opportune arrival of the victorious Camillus. But it is certainly true that Rome recovered with amazing rapidity from what might well have been an overwhelming blow. In the first three centuries and a half of her existence Rome has made so little progress that she has still a rival city not more than ten miles from her gates. She is reduced to her last stronghold, and has to ransom even that. Nevertheless in the course of another century and a half she is in undisputed possession of the whole of Italy. It has been suggested, not without proba-

bility, that the other Italian peoples suffered even more from this barbarian deluge, and that the Roman arms when once the acute crisis had passed encountered a less formidable resistance.

II

APOLLO THE DEFENDER

WE need not follow the story of Rome and the Gauls through its details. Time after time we find them leagued with the nations of Italy, when these were at war with the great power which was slowly compelling them either to subjection or to alliance. We find them, for instance, fighting side by side with the Samnites at Sentinum (295 B.C.), and with the Etrurians at the Vadimonian Lake (283 B.C.). But they made no really formidable attack on Rome for a long period after 390. The early part of the third century B.C. was a period of great unrest among the tribes on both sides of the Alps. In 279 this culminated in an invasion of Southern Europe so formidable that though Rome was not immediately concerned with it, some account of it must be given.

According to the narrative of Pausanias, who introduces the story as a digression in

his description of Delphi, the Gauls invaded Greece under the leadership of a certain Brennus, the same name, it will be observed, as that borne by the conqueror of Rome (the word *Brennus* has been said to mean "king"; but Celtic scholars are not agreed upon the point). His forces are said to have amounted to 150,000 infantry, a figure on which the authorities are fairly unanimous, and cavalry variously estimated at from 60,000 to 10,000.¹ The Greeks, though in a very depressed condition, roused themselves to resist. It was not a choice, as it had been two centuries before, between freedom and servitude; it was a question of life or death. The barbarians spared no one, and if they could not be checked in their advance, Greece would be turned into a desert. The stand was to be made, as of old, at Thermopylæ. The comparison between the forces led by Leonidas and those now assembled is interesting. The most numerous contingent was from a nation which scarcely appears in the history of Greece at its best days, the Ætolians. "Very

¹ Pausanias says that every trooper had two mounted attendants, themselves practised warriors and ready to supply him with a fresh horse, or even to take his place in the ranks. They must have had therefore much mobility, a phrase with which we have lately become very familiar.

numerous and including every arm," says Pausanias. Their heavy-armed infantry numbered 9,000. The other figures he does not give, or they have disappeared from his text. The whole force may have amounted to between thirty and forty thousand.

A battle that was fought in the Pass ended greatly to the advantage of the Greeks. The Gauls with their long and unwieldy swords and cumbrous shields were no match for their antagonists, though they fought with desperate valour. Their cavalry, the strongest arm they possessed, could not act on account of the nature of the ground. The result was that they were driven back with very heavy loss, while the Greeks had but forty killed.

Brennus, who seems to have had some military ability, seems to have become aware that the Ætolians made up the most numerous and effective part of the Greek army. He conceived the idea of detaching them by sending a force under his second-in-command to ravage Ætolia. The stratagem succeeded. The Ætolians, on hearing of the movement, hastened to march to the defence of their country. They were too late to save two of their frontier towns, which were stormed and sacked in the most brutal manner. But they

were in time to exact a heavy vengeance from the barbarians. Of the fifty thousand who had been detached on this expedition, less than half returned to the camp at Thermopylæ.

The incidents that followed bear a curious resemblance to the history of the first defence of Thermopylæ. The path by which the Persians, through the treachery of Ephialtes, were able to take the defenders of the pass in the rear was again used for the same purpose. The Phocian pickets were surprised as before, being hindered by the mist from seeing the Gauls till these were close upon them. But there was no obstinate determination among the Greeks to die upon the ground. They were carried off by the Athenian fleet, which from the first had been in attendance, keeping as close as possible to the shore.

The object which now roused the cupidity of the barbarians was the shrine of Delphi with its treasury, still rich in the offerings of many generations of worshippers and inquirers, though it had not altogether escaped the hand of the spoiler.¹ As in the Persian war,

¹ The treasury was robbed by the Phocians in 346, in what was called the Second Sacred War. The Phocians were condemned to make restitution by paying a fine of

the terrified inhabitants inquired of the god whether they should remove or conceal the sacred treasure. Again, as before, the answer was that the god would take care of his own. "I will provide, and with me the Maidens veiled in white," were the words of the oracle. The greater part of the army mustered at Thermopylæ had gone home; but there were some thousands who remained to protect Delphi. The god did not disdain to use their services, though the most effective protection came—so runs the story—from his own interference. The ground on which the Gauls had pitched their camp was shaken throughout the day by repeated shocks of earthquake, while overhead the thunder rolled and the lightning flashed incessantly. Through the darkened atmosphere might be seen the flashing arms of warriors who were more than mortal—one of them, it was said, the hero Pyrrhus, son of Achilles, who had met his death at Delphi many centuries before, and had ever since been worshipped as a local hero. That day,

10,000 talents (£2,500,000), but it is certain that they were never able to pay this amount. We may be sure, on the other hand, that many offerings had been made in the intervening time, and that as the treasury had remained intact for twenty years, it probably contained considerable wealth.

however, the Gauls held their own; many of the Phocians, in particular, were slain. But the night that followed was one of terrible suffering. A sharp frost set in, and following the frost came a heavy fall of snow. The snow symbolised "the maidens vested in white"—such, at least, was the rationalistic explanation given in after years. Nor was this all: great masses of stone from Parnassus, and rolling into the camp of the barbarians crushed as many as twenty or thirty by a single blow. The next day the Greek garrison at Delphi advanced against the invaders, the main body making a front attack, the Phocians, who were well acquainted with the country, assailing the rear. The Gauls did not lack in courage or firmness. Suffering though they did intensely from the cold, they made a resolute stand, and did not retreat till their leader was severely wounded and carried fainting off the field. Again the night was more fatal than the day. After dark a panic fear fell upon the camp. The barbarians seemed to see and hear enemies everywhere, and turned their arms upon each other. After this their destruction was certain. To a host without discipline a retreat is fatal. The Gauls were without stores, for they reckoned to be

supported by the countries through which they passed. But now the victorious enemy hung upon their rear, and cut off any stragglers that ventured to leave the main army. Famine and the incessant attacks of the pursuers reduced their numbers till there was but a scanty remnant of the great host that a few weeks before had descended on Northern Greece. Brennus, it is said, poisoned himself, unable to face his people at home after so disastrous a campaign.

Pausanias tells us that not one of the invading Gauls quitted Greece alive. It is hardly probable that this is true; and other writers gave a different account. What is certain is that one great division of the swarm that had descended from Northern into Southern Europe met with a very different fortune from that which overtook Brennus. This took a more easterly route, and plundering and destroying as it went reached the shores of the Hellespont. (This seems to have happened in 278 B.C., the year after that in which Delphi had been attacked.) The Gauls cast covetous glances on the rich territories of Asia, now separated from them by only a narrow stretch of water, and in one or another contrived to reach them. One division seized a few

small vessels and boats, and, as no sort of opposition was attempted, ferried themselves across; the other was actually transported by an Asiatic Greek prince, who was contending with his brother for the kingdom of Bithynia. They secured the victory for him, but Bithynia, and indeed the whole of Western Asia Minor, paid a heavy price for their help. Their history during the next few years is very obscure, but we may gather that they roamed from province to province, laying waste all the countries which they traversed. The unwarlike inhabitants of Asia Minor were quite powerless to check them. After some twelve years Antiochus, King of Syria, son of one of the great generals trained by Alexander, undertook the task, and accomplished it with such success that he earned the surname of *Soter*, "the Saviour." He could not indeed expel them; in fact, so far was their power from being broken that in 261 Antiochus lost his life in a battle with them. But the general result of the war was that the invaders were glad to settle down in a definite region which was ceded to them, and which was known by the name of Galatia, or Gallo-pæcia. The Galatians afterwards played an important part in history. But with this we are not now concerned.

II.

THE SWARM FROM THE NORTH

FOR a century and a half after the events recorded in my last chapter, no important southward movement of the northern nations took place. The destruction of one great host of Gaul and the permanent settlement of another in Western Asia must have diminished the population of the region beyond the Alps, and lightened the pressure on the means of living. Rome was not called upon to meet any powerful army of invaders ; a fortunate circumstance, when we consider the exhaustion that must have followed the terrible struggle of the Second Punic War. After the wars of the first half of the second century B.C., which practically reduced the successors of Alexander to insignificance, Rome even began to advance her frontiers northward.

Curiously enough these successes had the effect of bringing down on the Republic a

more formidable attack, the invasion led by Brennus not excepted, than she ever had had to meet before. For some years previous to the year 113 B.C., a homeless people called Cimbri, a word variously translated by friends and enemies as "champions" or "robbers," had been wandering about in the regions north of the Danube. The word suggests the well-known name of *Cymri*, but the resemblance of sound is deceptive. The Cimbri were really of the Germanic stock. In fact a remnant of the tribe preserved the name for many years afterwards in what seems to have been its original habitation, the peninsula of Denmark. What cause drove them southward cannot be stated with certainty. An ancient writer records one account that had come to his ears, that large tracts of land occupied by the tribe on the shores of the Baltic had been overflowed by the sea, and that its inhabitants were compelled to migrate or to starve. The story seemed incredible to the writer who preserved it. To us, who can easily find a parallel in the history of the great migrations of mankind, it appears not improbable. And this, in the absence of evidence, which indeed is not likely to be forthcoming, is all that we can say. For

some time the Celtic tribes that occupied the banks of the Danube had kept the Cimbri from reaching that river. But when the Celts had been seriously weakened by the armies of Rome, they were no longer able, or, it may be, no longer willing to continue this resistance. It is quite likely indeed that they welcomed as allies the people which they had been accustomed to regard as enemies. One thing is certain, that either then, or during their previous wanderings, the Cimbri had added to their hosts many Celtic comrades. The Celts were better armed, more advanced in the military art, and—a most important consideration—more familiar with the Roman methods of warfare. Hence we are not surprised to find among the leaders of the invading host, Germanic as it was in the main, some unquestionably Celtic names.

The movement was on a scale and of a kind new to Roman experience. It was no expedition of warriors. The whole nation had come. The Cimbri had a vast array of waggons with them, containing their wives, their children, and all that belonged to them. There was a curious resemblance between them—something of the same kind may be seen to-day in a shipload of Scandinavian emigrants—for all were huge of

stature, the women falling little short of the men, and all fair-haired. For weapons they had a javelin and a long sword; every man carried a long narrow shield, and the chiefs among them were also protected by coats of mail.

The first relation between the Romans and the Cimbri was not other than friendly. Papirius Carbo, the Consul in command of the Roman army, required them to abstain from interfering with the Taurisci, a Celtic tribe inhabiting the northern bank of the Danube, on the ground of being in alliance with Rome. The Cimbri did not refuse obedience. Then Carbo was guilty of a shameful act of treachery, which, as we shall see, met with its due reward. He offered the strangers guides, who were to lead them to a region which they might occupy without hindrance. These guides had in fact instructions to lead the Cimbri into an ambush which had been carefully prepared for them. The plot succeeded in a way, but the result was very different from what Carbo had expected. The Cimbri turned upon their betrayers, inflicted upon them a heavy loss, and, but for the opportune breaking of a great storm over the battlefield, would have entirely destroyed them.

The conquerors did not move southwards, as

might have been expected, but marching west through Northern Switzerland and South-eastern Gaul, remained quiet for a while. They were, however, still in need of land which they could call their own, and they asked the help of the Roman general who was in command at the frontier to help them in obtaining it. His own reply was to attack them, with no better result than a terrible slaughter among his troops and the loss of his camp. The Cimbri sent an embassy to Rome, repeating the request that they made to the Consul, and while they waited for the reply employed themselves in subjugating their Celtic neighbours.

Eight years had now passed since the defeat of Carbo, and the unexpected reprieve which Rome had enjoyed was at an end. The Cimbri, disappointed at receiving no reply to their demands from Rome, and recognising that it would be more profitable to invade Italy than to fight for less desirable regions in Gaul, marched to the Rhone under the command of their king Boiorix. The Romans had no less than three armies on the spot. The weakest of the three, commanded by the ex-Consul Æmilius Scaurus, was the first to be attacked. It was routed, and its commander taken prisoner. Brought before King Boiorix,

Scaurus warned the invader not to venture on invading Italy, and was put to death for what was judged to be presumption. The two remaining armies were concentrated at Arausio, on the left bank of the Rhone. Unhappily the two officers in command were enemies. They would not occupy a common camp, nor would they deliberate on the plan of campaign that was to be followed. The result was a frightful disaster. It is possible that a conflict might have been avoided altogether. Even after the defeat of Scaurus the two consular armies presented so formidable an appearance that Boiorix expressed himself willing to treat. Negotiations were actually in progress when Cæpio, an ex-Consul, who was inferior in rank to the Consul Maximus, committed an act of surprising folly. Fearing that his colleague might gain all the credit if the negotiations with the Cimbri were successful, he attacked the enemy with the force under his immediate command. The battle of Arausio, fought on October 6, 105, was not less fatal than Allia and Cannæ, followed as it was by the defeat of the other army. Eighty thousand soldiers are said to have been slain on the field, or to have perished in the retreat.

At Rome the result was something like a revolution. The political history of the time is

outside my province. It will be enough, therefore, to say that the most renowned general of the time, C. Marius, was put in supreme command. He was made Consul, in spite of the law that forbade especial election to this office, and he was continued in command for five years in succession.

The Cimbri had not actually carried out their intention of invading Italy. They had turned aside to plunder South-western Gaul, and even to cross the Pyrenees into Spain. Marius made use of the delay, which it is scarcely too much to say was the salvation of Rome, to strengthen the defences of Northern Italy, to recall the wavering tribes of Cisalpine Gaul to their allegiances, and to find auxiliaries among the peoples which had as much reason as had Rome herself to dread the success of the Cimbri.

This people had now received considerable reinforcements. They had been joined by some Helvetian tribes, and by the Teutones, old neighbours in Northern Europe, and now, by a curious chance, associated with them in their invasion of the south. The first intention of the allies was to force their way into Italy in one vast army. This was given up, probably on account of the mechanical difficulty connected with transport. It was finally arranged that

the Teutones, with the Helvetian tribe of the Amburones and a Cimbrian contingent, were to invade Italy by the western passes of the Alps, and that the Cimbri, also reinforced by some Helvetians, should try the passes to the east. It is with the former of these two divisions that I am first concerned.

Marius had taken up his position in a strongly fortified camp at the junction of the Rhone and the Isère. Here he resolutely refused to risk the chances of a battle. It was no question, he represented to the impatient spirits in his army, of victories and of triumphs, but of the safety of Rome, which would be lost if her last army were defeated. To the soldiers, who were not less impatient, he used different arguments, appealing, for instance, to their superstition. He affirmed that he was in possession of oracles which promised Rome a decisive victory, which was to be won, however, at a certain place and time. There was a prophetess in his camp, a Syrian, very possibly a Jewess by birth, whom he professed to consult, and who, we may reasonably suppose, accommodated her answers to his ideas of the military necessities of the time. The barbarians were encouraged by the inaction of the Romans to make an attack on the camp. They were

easily repulsed, and speedily abandoned the attempt, marching forward as if the Roman force might safely be neglected. For six days, so vast was their array of fighting-men and baggage, they filed past the camp, uttering insulting cries as they went. When they had passed, Marius broke up his camp and followed them. He never relaxed, however, his precautions. He chose every night a strong position for his camp, and fortified it to resist an attack. At Aquæ Sextiæ (Aix)¹ he determined to bring the enemy to an engagement.

The story ran that he deliberately chose a position for his camp where the supply of water was short, and that when the soldiers complained he pointed to the river that ran close to the position of the barbarians, saying, "There is drink, but you must buy it with blood." "Let us go then," cried the soldiers, "while our blood still flows in our veins." Marius insisted upon their first fortifying the camp. The legion was too well disciplined not to obey him, but there were others less amenable to discipline, and a collision with the enemy took place before the day was out. The camp followers, who had no water for their beasts, or even for themselves,

¹ About 15 miles to the north of Marseilles. It must be distinguished, of course, from Aix-les-Bains.

flocked down to the river, having armed themselves as well as they could. Here they came into collision with the Amburones, who, taken at first by surprise, soon recovered their courage, and raising their warcry with what is described as a terrific volume of sound, advanced to repel the new-comers. The light-armed Ligurians on the Roman side came to the help of their comrades, and these again were supported by some of the regular troops. The affair was a skirmish on a very large scale rather than a battle. The Romans had much the best of it, but they were far from feeling the security of conquerors. They spent the night under arms, expecting from hour to hour an assault upon their camp.

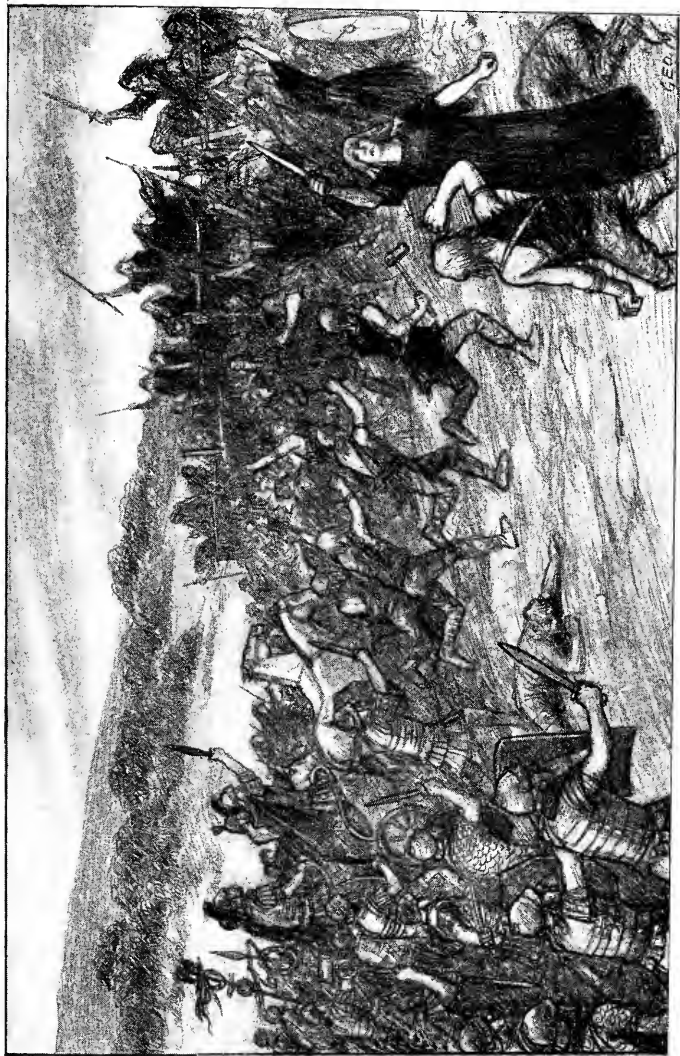
The barbarians, however, were less confident than Marius supposed. For two days they remained inactive, and even then it was not they who challenged the conflict. Marius, who had great gifts as a general, had observed a convenient place in the rear of the enemy's position where an ambush might be conveniently laid. Here he posted three thousand men under the command of Marcellus. In the battle that followed the unexpected onslaught of this force on the barbarian rear did much to decide the issue of the day. Attacked both in

front and in rear the Teutones gave way. To give way under such circumstances meant utter destruction. What the numbers of the slain and the captured may have been it is impossible to say. Levy says that 200,000 were slain, 180,000 taken prisoners. Other authorities reduce the number of the slain by a half. One thing, however, is certain, that the Teutones ceased to exist. Those who did not fall on the field or in the rout put an end to their own lives. The women also killed themselves rather than fall into the hands of the enemy. It is curious that the name of the tribe was preserved by the remnant left behind in its original seat when the great host migrated southward, and that it is now used to designate one of the great families of the human race. Marius was just about to set fire to a huge pile of the spoils of the dead when messengers from Rome reached the field, announcing that he had been elected for the fifth time to the Consulship.

But Rome was not yet out of danger, for the Cimbri were yet to be accounted for. They had forced their way into Italy, Lutatius Catulus, the colleague of Marius in the Consulship, finding himself unable to stop them. His original intention had been to defend the passes

of the Tyrol, but he relinquished the idea and took up a strong position on the Athesis (*Adige*). Even here he did not feel safe. His troops indeed were so terrified by the report of the barbarians' advance that they refused to remain, and Catulus, making a merit of necessity, putting himself at their head, retreated to the southern side of the Po, leaving the richest plains of Northern Italy to the mercy of the foe.

When news of the threatening position of affairs reached Rome Marius was summoned to the capital to advise on the course to be pursued. As soon as he arrived the people, with whom he was in the very highest favour, offered him a triumph for his victory over the Teutones. He refused to accept the honour so long as the Cimbri remained on Roman soil. He at once went northwards, and summoning to him the *élite* of his legions, marched to reinforce Catulus. He effected a junction with this general near Vercellæ (*Vercelli*). The Cimbri had not heard, it seems, of the disaster which had overtaken the Teutones, and put off fighting in the hope of being joined by them. They even sent envoys to the Roman generals, demanding an allotment of land for themselves and their kinsmen. "We have given your kinsmen their portion, and they are not likely



DEFEAT OF THE CIMBRI IN THE BATTLE AT THE WAGGONS.

to be disturbed in it," replied Marius with grim humour. "You shall pay dearly for your jest," they replied and prepared to depart. "Nay," said the Roman, "you must not depart without saluting your relatives," and he ordered the captive kings of the Teutones who had been captured in an attempt to cross the Alps to be produced. After this nothing remained but to fight with as little delay as possible.

The combined forces of the Romans numbered between 50,000 and 60,000. We have no trustworthy account of the battle which followed, Plutarch's narrative being borrowed, it would seem, from writers not favourable to Marius, from Catulus himself, who left a history of his campaign, and from the notebook of Sylla, who was serving with Catulus. His story is that Marius missed his way in a dust-storm that suddenly swept over the plain, and that he wandered about vainly seeking the enemy till the battle had been practically decided by the courage of the troops commanded by Catulus and his lieutenant, Sulla. It is certain, however, that at Rome the credit of the victory was, in the main, assigned to Marius. About one part of the battle there is, however, no doubt. Never has there been seen a more tragic spectacle. The

scene that closed the day at *Aquæ Sextiæ* was repeated on a larger scale and with added horrors at the *Campi Raudii*.¹ The Cimbrian women stood on the waggons robed in black. They slaughtered the fugitives when these sought temporary shelter behind the barricade, sparing neither father, brother, or husband. Then they slaughtered their children, and finally put an end to their own lives. As many as sixty thousand prisoners, however, were taken, while the number that fell on the field of battle is said to have been twice as great. The Cimbri perished as utterly as the Teutones.

The triumph which Marius and his colleague celebrated on their return to Rome was indeed well deserved if we consider the consequences of the victory which it was given to reward. For more than two centuries Rome was not again called upon to fight for her life against barbarian foes. Her armies met indeed more than once with serious disasters, but these defeats were incurred in campaigns of aggression. And if, as might easily happen, her frontiers were sometimes crossed, it was a mere matter of hordes of casual plunderers, whose movements did not really affect the general course of events.

¹ The spot cannot be identified, but it must have been near Vercellæ.

IV

BEYOND THE PYRENEES

WE have seen how Carthage, expelled from the islands that belonged to Italy, found compensation in Spain. When the issue of the Second Punic War was decided against her, and her domains were limited to Africa, Spain passed into Roman hands. Much of the country, however, had never acknowledged the rule of either power, and it required two centuries of effort before it became what it was for the first three centuries of our era, the most completely Latinized of all the Roman provinces.

The Carthaginians were finally driven from Spain in 206. We may pass quickly over the next fifty years. By degrees the Roman power advanced till the whole peninsula, some mountainous regions in the north and centre excepted, became subject to it. Rebellions were fre-

quent, for the Roman system was to change the provincial governors almost from year to year, and some of these officials were cruel and extortionate. As I am not writing a history either of Rome or of Spain, I must limit myself to the most important and representative persons and events.

Viriathus was a native of Lusitania, a region nearly corresponding to what is now called Portugal. His hatred of the Romans came from a shameful act of treachery from which his countrymen suffered at the hands of one of the Roman generals. This man had expressed his pity for the poverty of their country, which drove them, he said, into robbing their neighbours. He would give them, if they would trust him, lands better worth cultivating. What he did was to massacre them in detachments, one detachment being kept in ignorance of the fate of those who had gone before. Viriathus was one of the few who escaped.

It was not for some time that he secured the complete confidence of his countrymen, or was able to collect an army with which he could meet his adversaries in the field. His first great success was won in 147 B.C., when the proprætor Vetilius was drawn into an ambush and defeated. Vetilius was taken prisoner and

killed by his captors, who, seeing only a "very fat old man," did not recognise his value. Two-fifths of the army of ten thousand perished at the same time. Another disaster happened in the year following. Plautius, the Roman general, was deceived by a pretended retreat, and suffered a heavy loss of men. Affairs seemed to be in so serious a condition that the authorities at Rome resolved on sending a large force and as able a commander as they could find to the seat of war. The man they chose was Fabius, the brother of the younger Scipio, and a son therefore of the famous conqueror of Macedonia.¹ Before Fabius could reach the scene of war another Roman army had been almost destroyed. Fabius himself for a time could do but little. He had to content himself with getting his forces, all of them newly recruited, into order. In his second year of command, however, he inflicted a severe defeat on Viriathus and compelled him to evacuate the Roman territory.

The war was carried on with varying fortunes for four years. In 141 B.C. it seemed to have been brought to a conclusion highly favourable to the Lusitanians and their gallant

¹ Æmilius Paullus. This son had been adopted into the Fabian family.

leaders. Viriathus surprised a Roman army that was investing one of the Lusitanian towns, and inflicted upon it so heavy a loss that it was compelled to raise the siege. In their retreat the Romans became entangled in a narrow pass, and were compelled to surrender. Viriathus was moderate in his demands. Lusitania was to be independent, and its people recognised as allies and friends of Rome. This treaty was ratified at Rome. But the ambition of a Roman general and the bad faith of the Senate brought this arrangement to an end. Servilius Cæpio was disappointed to find that the war had been brought to an end, and obtained permission from the Senate, which had not the effrontery to cancel the treaty, to make private war upon Viriathus. Before long something happened that gave the desired pretext, and Viriathus was declared a public enemy. He sent envoys to the Roman camp to arrange, if it were possible, terms of peace. Cæpio persuaded them by promises of great rewards to murder their chief. This they did, stabbing him in the neck as he lay asleep in his tent fully armed. The blow was so skilfully given that he died without a groan, and the murderers were able to escape to the Roman camp. From Cæpio, however, they

received nothing but the remark that the Romans did not approve and could not reward soldiers who slew their own general. One is glad to record the disappointment of such villains, but it is not easy to understand the unblushing assurance with which Roman historians inveigh against the "*Punic faith*," as they are pleased to call it, of Hannibal. The war was carried on for a time, but the Lusitanians could find no competent successor to Viriathus and were compelled to submit.

But Spain was not yet subdued. The scene of war was transferred to Numantia (now Garay on the upper waters of the Douro). Though not a walled town, it was a very strong place, environed with woods, situated on steep cliffs, and protected by two rivers. The one accessible side was strongly entrenched. The fighting force which it could muster was small, numbering not more than eight thousand, but there were no better fighting-men in all Spain. General succeeded general in the Roman camp, but no advance was made. At last the people of Rome waxed impatient. There had been, they said, the same disappointment and mismanagement at Carthage, and they must employ the same man to put an end to them. Scipio Africanus was

accordingly elected. He declined to take any men from the muster roll. There were soldiers enough, he thought, in Spain. And there was no lack of volunteers attracted by his remarkable prestige, among them a company of five hundred to which he gave the name of the "Company of Friends."¹ Even these he left to follow him while he hurried on to do for the besieging army at Numantia what he had done ten years before at Carthage. He cleared it of an idle and dissolute multitude, among whom soothsayers are specially mentioned, perpetually consulted, says the historian, by a soldiery demoralised by fear. A spit, a brass pot, and a single drinking-cup were all that was allowed for mess furniture; the rations were cut down to flesh, boiled or roasted (bread, we may presume, though it is not mentioned). In short, every luxury was banished, some of them seeming, certainly, a little strange, bath attendants, for instance. "Your mules," he said, "want rubbing down, for they have no hands, but you have." This purification effected, he proceeded to harden his men by exercise, avoiding battle till he thought they were fit for it. It is interesting to find that in

¹ Possibly in recollection of the Royal Companions in the army of Alexander the Great, *vide* p. 130.

the winter of this year he was joined by a contingent of African troops under the command of Jugurtha, a grandson of the old king Masinissa.

The Romans had an overwhelming superiority in numbers, and it was only a matter of time for a patient and skilful commander such as was Scipio to make resistance impossible. The river, which the besieged had found very useful as a method of communicating with the outer world and replenishing their supplies, was closed against them by elaborate contrivances. The whole town, which had a compass of fifteen miles, was closely invested, while a system of signals for the protection of the siege works from sudden attack was organised. Thirty thousand men were on constant duty in guarding the turrets and ramparts; twenty thousand more were held in readiness to deliver an assault wherever and whenever Scipio might see fit, and there was a further reserve of ten thousand. Every man of the whole number had his place, which he was not permitted to leave except under express orders. The besieged did not give up the hope of damaging the siege works, and made frequent attacks, but they contended in vain against a system so elaborately complete, one, too, which

received the unwearying attention of the man who had contrived it. Not a day or a night passed, we are told, without Scipio visiting the whole circle of the investment. After all, it was by the pressure of famine not by superior strength that Numantia fell. An embassy was sent to ask for terms. Scipio, who knew from the deserters how desperate was the condition of the city, demanded an unconditional surrender. The unhappy men who carried back this unwelcome reply were slain by their infuriated countrymen. But there was no other alternative, except death. That was the choice of the great majority ; a few hundreds came out to the conqueror, such a miserable spectacle, so squalid, so emaciated, and withal so savage as none had ever seen before. Scipio chose fifty of the poor wretches to adorn his triumph ; the rest he sold as slaves. It must be admitted that the Romans were not generous enemies, for Scipio was conspicuous among his countrymen for humanity and culture. Yet this was the best treatment he could bring himself to accord to foes so brave that he had never ventured an assault on their city.

Sertorius is a remarkable, one might say, an admirable figure, but the story of the long

struggle between him and the generals of Rome scarcely belongs to my subject. Yet it is not wholly unconnected with it. Political life at Rome did not habitually run into the excesses which were so lamentably common in the Greek states. When the aristocrat Coriolanus led the Volscian armies against his own country the act was exceptional. Sertorius was a democratic Coriolanus.

Sertorius won considerable distinction as a soldier in the campaigns against the Cimbri and Teutones. When the Consul Cæpio was defeated he narrowly escaped with his life, swimming across the Rhone in full armour; he fought at Aquæ Sextiæ, having done good service by entering the camp of the Teutones as a spy. When the Civil War broke out he declared for the democratic party. After various changes of fortune the aristocrats were victorious, and then Sertorius found himself in a most difficult position. The democratic leaders had given him a command in Spain, as much to get rid of him, for he was too honourable to suit them, as for any other reason. By degrees he drifted into the position of an enemy. He opposed the march of a Consular army sent across the Pyrenees by the Roman government, crossed to Africa when he

could no longer remain in Spain, and came back again to take command of the Lusitanians when this tribe rebelled against Rome. Here he was joined by other adherents of the democratic party, the most important of whom was a certain Perpenna, who brought with him a considerable force, and became his second-in-command. All this time, though waging war with Roman consuls and proconsuls, he claimed to be the Roman governor of Spain, establishing, for instance, a Senate into which no one but Roman citizens were admitted. In 77 B.C. Pompey, who was already famous as a soldier—he had enjoyed the honour of a triumph at the age of twenty-five—was sent into Spain. But Pompey found his task more than he could perform. He won, it is true, victories over Sertorius' lieutenants, but he could not claim any decided success over the great man himself. In a great battle fought on the banks of the Sucro he was routed with the loss of six thousand men. Nor during the three years that followed did he make much way. What really happened during this time it is not easy to say. By some accounts Sertorius became self-indulgent and arbitrary; according to others, his Roman colleagues in command, many of them of better birth than their superior, were

jealous of him. What is certain is that it was by a Roman hand that he fell. In 72 B.C. he was assassinated by the orders of Perpenna. Perpenna was wholly unequal to the position which he hoped to attain by the death of his chief. He was defeated in the first battle which he fought with the Roman armies, and was taken prisoner. To save his life he offered to put into Pompey's hands the private letters of Sertorius. Many of them had been sent from Rome, and would probably have compromised various persons of distinction. Pompey ordered the letters to be burnt and Perpenna to be executed.

One Spanish people, the Cantabri, represented by the modern Basques, still retained their independence. They were not finally subdued till fifty years after the death of Sertorius, and even then they had to be watched and kept in order. Spain, however, as a whole became the most thoroughly Italian in manners and speech of all the provinces of Rome.

V

ACROSS EUPHRATES

IT would be impossible to pass over without notice one of the most formidable enemies that Rome ever encountered—Mithradates, King of Pontus. Mithradates was, indeed, hardly to be called a barbarian. He had a taste for art and letters, had a museum of Greek and Persian antiquities, and played the part of a generous patron to poets and philosophers. But he was a barbarian at heart, savage and cruel in his dealings with his kinsfolk and his servants, and with no conception of enlightened rule. Rome, however oppressive and short-sighted her individual citizens might be, was an agent of civilisation, and her final triumph over the King of Pontus, the ablest, it may be said, of the Eastern potentates with whom she came into connection, was for the general good of mankind.

Mithradates came to the throne of Pontus

in early youth. He cherished from the first ambitious schemes of extending his dominions. At first his efforts were directed against his neighbours on the north and east; when he attempted to extend his frontiers westward he naturally came into collision with the Romans. It is needless to go into details; it will suffice to say that war was declared in B.C. 89. The time suited Mithradates very well, for it found Rome in a very helpless condition. What is called the Social War, *i.e.*, the revolt of the Italian allies against Rome, was still in progress, and there was positively no army available to meet the huge host, nearly 300,000 in all, which the King brought into the field. All that the Roman officers in Lesser Asia could do was to shut themselves up in such fortified towns as they could hope to hold against the King. Mithradates now gave orders for an act which was as foolish as it was wicked. He was at Ephesus—the fact shows how little remained to Rome—when he directed that all Italians sojourning in Lesser Asia should be put to death. Had he said “Romans,” not “Italians,” he might have secured the combination with himself of the Italian adversaries of Rome. As it was he hopelessly alienated them.

Nor did he make himself better liked by his new subjects in Asia. They found that in exchanging masters they had lost much more than they had gained. The Romans were often oppressive, but they had at least some kind of system, and were, in theory at least, subject to law; the King was a capricious tyrant, whose whims, often as cruel as they were strange, had to be instantaneously humoured under pain of death or torture. The end was that Mithradates was beaten everywhere. An army which he had sent into Greece was destroyed. His arms were equally unsuccessful in Asia. An attempt to make common cause with Sulla's political opponents—some of the democratic leaders were actually in arms—came to nothing. Finally, in 84 peace was made. The King had to give up all his conquests, to surrender for punishments the men who had taken a leading part in the massacre, and to pay a war indemnity of 20,000 talents.¹

After a somewhat uneasy peace of ten years war broke out again. Each side was suspicious of the other. Mithradates had steadily employed himself in increasing his dominions in every direction where he did not come into actual

¹ Nearly £5,000,000, taking the talent at £240.

collision with Rome. Rome, on the other hand, had a way of receiving legacies of kingdoms, very much to the annoyance of those who conceived themselves to have a better title to the inheritance. In 75 B.C., for instance, she took possession of Bithynia, which Mithradates had always coveted, in accordance with the will of Nicomedes III. The King naturally took offence at this proceeding, and as he saw at the same time a prospect of taking his great enemy at a disadvantage, he declared war. He hoped that Sertorius in Spain would make a diversion in his favour, and he also looked for help from the pirates who swarmed in the Mediterranean.

These expectations were but partially fulfilled. Sertorius was very near the end of his career, and could be practically ignored. Mithradates won a few successes here and there, but he had a very able soldier, Lucullus, to contend with. After a few months' fighting he had to fly from his kingdom and take refuge with his son-in-law, Tigranes, King of Armenia.

Lucullus now ventured on a very bold course of action. He sent envoys to Tigranes demanding the surrender of Mithradates. This was, of course, refused, as indeed Lucullus

expected and even intended that it should be. The Roman general then crossed the Euphrates and marched on Tigranocerta. This was a new city, and was the creation as it bore the name of Tigranes. He had peopled it with inhabitants, taken, after the fashion of Eastern kings, from conquered or simply subject tribes, and had supplied it with all the conveniences and ornaments of Greek civilisation. Its walls, the historian tells us, were seventy feet high, and must have been of huge circuit, if there were parks and lakes within them. Lucullus laid siege to the city, though he could hardly have had sufficient force to invest it. It was not long before Tigranes moved to its relief. At first, indeed, he had simply refused to believe that the Romans could have made so audacious an advance, and with a savagery, in curious contrast with his veneer of civilisation, ordered the messenger who brought the unwelcome news to be crucified. When he learnt the truth, he raised a huge army—250,000 infantry and 50,000 cavalry are the numbers given us by historians—and marched to attack Lucullus.

Mithradates was with his son-in-law, and strongly advised him not to risk a battle. "Use your cavalry to cut off his supplies," was his advice, for the old King knew what

Roman soldiers were when they were led by such a general as Lucullus. Tigranes laughed to scorn this prudent counsel. He could not conceive that the handful of men which were all that the Romans had to oppose to him, could possibly stand up against an army which was nearly twenty times as numerous. For Lucullus had divided his small force, leaving a part to carry on the siege of the city while he went to meet Tigranes with the remainder.¹

The battle that followed was one of the most remarkable in history, worthy to be ranked with Marathon, for, indeed, the odds were at least as great as any of which we have a record. Unfortunately for the fame of Lucullus there was no one to tell the story as it ought to have been told. The strategy of Lucullus was that employed times out of number with success by the leader of a regular army acting against an undisciplined host—he outflanked his opponents. What we can understand from the accounts, not easily reconcilable, is that a front attack was made, or rather threatened, by the Roman cavalry. It advanced,

¹ “If these men come as ambassadors,” Tigranes is reported to have said, “there are too many of them; if they are an army there are certainly too few.” But he was not the first to use the witticism.

and then retreated, in seeming panic, and the Asiatics pursued in headlong haste. Meanwhile the outflanking movement had been made unseen by the infantry. Attacking the rear of the army they sent the camp-followers flying in wild confusion; these broke the lines of the infantry; the infantry in turn threw the horsemen into confusion. The panic once set up, the huge, unmanageable numbers of the Asiatic host did nothing but aggravate it. The pursuit was fierce and pitiless. Lucullus threatened the severest penalties against any soldier who should turn aside for a moment to encumber himself with spoil. For fifteen miles the road was strewed with costly chains and bracelets which no one picked up. The pursuit over, the men were allowed to appropriate all the treasures they could find. *Five* Romans, and five only, are said to have been slain. The enemy's dead were counted by tens of thousands.

This great victory had not, it is true, the permanent result which might have been expected. This failure was due to the weakness of the Government at home and the jealousy of parties. Lucullus was hampered by want of means, and had to share his authority with incompetent colleagues. It was

not long before both Tigranes and Mithradates recovered all that they had lost.

But this was but a temporary falling back of the Roman power. The people, profoundly dissatisfied with the policy that had made such brilliant victories unproductive, put the supreme power into the hands of a man whom it could trust. In 67 B.C. Pompey cleared the Mediterranean of the pirates, and two years later he brought to an end the long struggle with Mithradates. Tigranes had made his submission to Rome, and, while surrendering all his conquests, had been permitted to retain his hereditary kingdom of Armenia. Mithradates was driven to take refuge in a remote region at the eastern end of the Black Sea. He had conceived, it is said, a bold scheme of raising the tribes to the north of that sea and falling upon Italy as the Gauls and as Hannibal had fallen upon it. But he had not the means of carrying out so large a project. His subjects, wearied of perpetual exactions, rebelled, led by one of his sons, and he saw that nothing remained but death. His wives and his daughters were compelled or possibly offered to drink poison. He drank it himself, but—so runs the story—had so fortified himself with antidotes, that the drug did not affect him.

He then commanded a Celtic mercenary to render him the last service by a stroke of his sword. By his death the Roman dominion was practically established as far as the Euphrates. That it was not to be extended beyond it was practically proved by the events which I have now to relate.

Five years after the fall of Mithradates there was formed at Rome what is commonly called the First Triumvirate.¹

Of the three men who composed it Pompey had gained a great reputation as a soldier, Cæsar had acquired almost equal distinction by his victory in Gaul, while Crassus, though he had served with credit on more than one occasion, was distinctly inferior in this respect to his colleagues. He felt that such an inferiority would tell greatly against him when the spoils came to be divided. It was to the East that he looked for the opportunity that he desired. There had been trouble in the region beyond the Euphrates for some time, and Rome, accused of having failed to keep

¹ Mommsen speaks of it as the *Second*, the First being a coalition of the same persons ten years before. It is as well to remark that the coalition had no legal existence. It was an informal agreement between the three most powerful citizens to act together. The *Second* Triumvirate, in 43 B.C., was a regularly constituted body.

her treaty arrangement, was, of course, mixed up in it. In 55 B.C., the year when Cæsar's command in Gaul had been renewed for a second period of five years, Crassus was elected Consul, his colleague being Pompey. The province allotted to him after his year of office was Syria, and he left Rome before the year was out to take up his command. He did not meet with anything like universal approval. The decree which gave him the province of Syria made no mention of Parthia, but everyone knew that Parthia was to be attacked, and there was a strong party that, either from prudence or from a sense of right, was strongly opposed to what was manifestly a war of aggression. One of the Tribunes of the People attempted to stop his departure from Rome, actually bidding his attendant detain him by force. This attempt failing, he took his stand at the gate by which Crassus was to depart, and on a hastily constructed altar performed some mysterious rite by which he devoted, under strange and awful curses, the head of Crassus to destruction. But Crassus persevered; arrived at Brundisium he would not wait for favourable weather, but at once crossed the sea, not without suffering a considerable loss in ships. The rest of his journey he

performed by land. When passing through Galatia he was entertained by the prince of that country, Deiotarus, then a very old man. Deiotarus was busy building a city, and Crassus jestingly marvelled that at such an age he should engage in such an undertaking. "And you," replied the old man, "who are on your way to Parthia, are not quite in your youth." Crassus was sixty, and looked, we are told, considerably older.

His first operations, after his arrival, were fairly successful, but he did not make a favourable impression. The Euphrates he crossed without opposition, and he received the submission of some important towns in Mesopotamia. He was considered, on the other hand, to have been wanting in dignity when he allowed his soldiers to salute him on the field as Imperator after the capture of a third-rate fortress—for this was a compliment that was appropriate only to real achievements. And in his proceedings generally he seemed to look to the collection of wealth rather than to military glory. The tokens of ill-fortune to come were, of course, not wanting. Crassus had been joined by his son, who had been serving as one of Cæsar's lieutenants in Gaul, and both paid a visit to a famous temple at

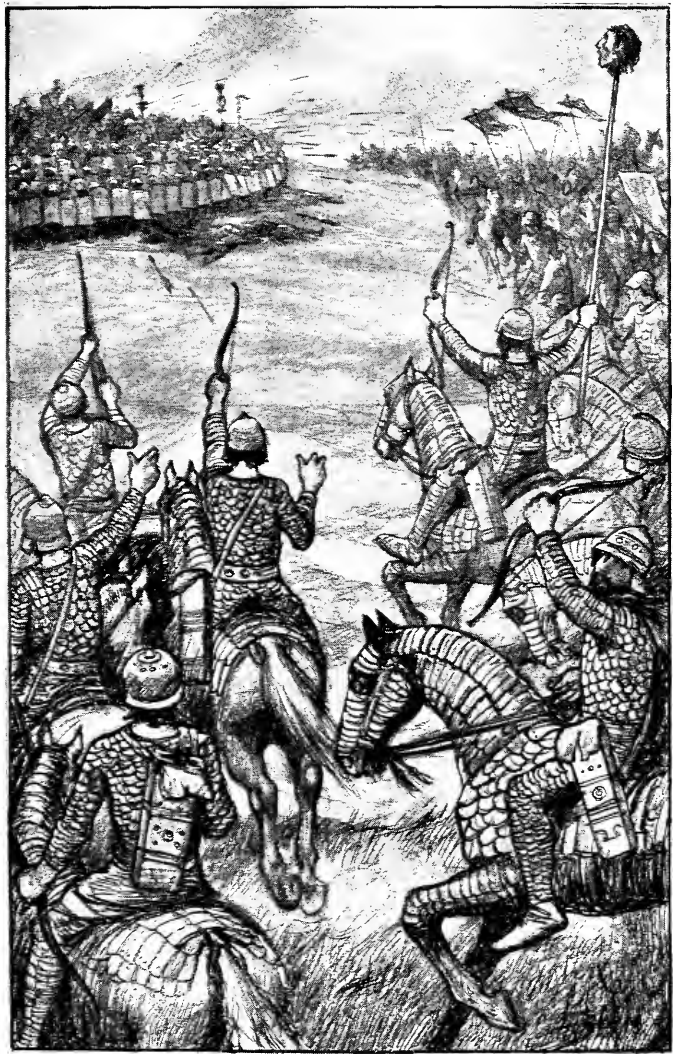
Hierapolis. As they were leaving it the son caught his foot and fell, and the elder man stumbled over him. The enemy were in no submissive mood. Envoys from the Parthian king declared that if Crassus was executing the will of the Roman people the Parthians would avenge the insult to the utmost, but that if he was only seeking his own private ends they would pardon an old man's folly and restore unharmed the garrisons who were virtually their prisoners. Crassus replied that he would give them an answer at Seleucia, their capital. "Seleucia!" cried the leader of the embassy, holding up the palm of his hand. "Hair will grow on this before you see Seleucia." The army soon became seriously discouraged. The Parthians were evidently a more formidable enemy than they had yet encountered, very different from the unwarlike races of Western Asia. The reports of the soothsayers were of the gloomiest kind, and omens of coming disasters were frequent. The spot selected for a camp was twice struck by lightning; when the rations were distributed the articles first given out were lentils and salt, the two chief articles in the meals served for the spirits of the dead. Worst of all, the eagle-standard of the legion that was the first

to advance was seen to turn away from the enemy's country.

Crassus had under his command no contemptible force—seven legions, 4,000 cavalry, and an equal number of light-armed troops. The first reports that reached him represented the enemy as shrinking from the contest. This notion was confirmed by an Arab chief, Abgarus of Edessa, who was believed to be friendly to Rome. He had certainly done good service to Pompey, but he was now acting in the interest of the Parthian king. He urged on Crassus an immediate advance ; the enemy, he declared, were already removing their most valuable property to a place of safety. This was all false. The Parthian king with half his army was ravaging Armenia ; his commander-in-chief had been detached with the other half to deal with Crassus. The Romans moved forward with all the haste that they could compass. Day after day they advanced, but no enemy could be seen. At last some horsemen were descried in the distance, and Abgarus was sent on in advance to reconnoitre. He did not return, and the army again moved forwards. Their march brought them to a river called the Balissen. Crassus was advised by his staff to halt and

encamp. He was too impatient to listen to this counsel, and still advanced. It was not long before he came in sight of the enemy. At first sight the Parthian host did not seem very formidable. It did not display any of the pomp and circumstance of war, and its numbers had been carefully concealed. Then by a sudden movement the banners of glistening silk embroidered with gold were displayed, and the helmets and coats of mail glittered in the sun, the drums giving out all the time a terrific volume of sound. Never before had the Romans encountered a similar enemy. It was a host of cavalry which they had to meet, most of them archers, both man and horse being protected with armour made sometimes of iron, sometimes of leather. The Romans were taken at a terrible disadvantage. All their tactics, especially the close order in which they were accustomed to fight, told against them, whilst their light-armed troops were hopelessly outnumbered. The younger Crassus was sent forward by his father with a picked force, in the hope that he might relieve the legions of the brunt of the attack. The enemy retreated before him, but when they had lured him on out of sight or reach of the main army they turned upon him. He had no choice, so

overwhelming were their numbers, but to fall back before them. He made a stand at a hill, on the sloping side of which he ranged what troops remained to him. But the ranks rising one above another offered a broader target to the Parthian archers. Nearly the whole force perished, Crassus and his officers by their own hands. Five hundred were taken prisoners; none escaped. The first knowledge that the elder Crassus had of his son's fate was the sight of his head on a pole. The attack upon the legions was renewed again and again until darkness brought a temporary relief. During the night the Romans retreated, and reached Carrhæ in safety. But even then their troubles were not ended. Crassus either would not or could not stay at Carrhæ, and set out in the hope of reaching the friendly country of Armenia. He was overtaken, and consented to hold a conference with the Parthian commander to discuss the terms of an armistice. It is not clear whether the Parthians intended treachery; anyhow the Romans suspected it. A fierce quarrel ensued; the Roman officers were killed, and Crassus put an end to his own life. Of the army many were taken prisoners, and a few contrived to escape. But as a force it ceased to exist.



CRASSUS DEFEATED BY THE PARTHIANS.

The battle of Carrhæ, as it may be called, though it happened at some distance from that town, was one of the worst disasters in Roman history. What especially touched the pride of the Empire was the submission of the numerous prisoners to their fate. Horace inveighs against the cowardice of the men who were content to forget all the glorious associations of Rome and to become the subjects of a barbarian king. He seeks to console himself by telling how the standards captured from the army of Crassus were torn down from the Parthian temples by the victorious Augustus. What really happened was that these trophies were given up under the conditions of a peace made between Parthia and Rome. There was more than one struggle between the two powers, and the superiority of Roman arms was vindicated more than once. Parthia, also, had its triumphs. One Roman Emperor, Valerian, ended his days in Parthian captivity. When the Empire fell in the third century of our era it was by a rebellion among its own subjects.

VI

THE CONQUESTS OF CÆSAR

THE second great European conquest made by Rome outside the borders of Italy was Gaul. The beginning of this conquest, which was spread over about a century, the last ten years, however, being by far the most productive of result, belongs to the year 152 B.C. The people of Massilia (Marseilles) begged the help of the Romans against two tribes of Gaul who were attacking dependencies of theirs. Much the same thing happened again some twenty years later. The end of this and of other affairs which it is not necessary to describe in detail was the establishment in 121 B.C. of what was called the *Provincia* (a name still preserved in the modern Provence). Two colonies were founded in this region, one at Aquæ Sextiæ (*Aix*), the other at Narbo Marcius (*Narbonne*). The *Provincia* occupied

the valley of the Rhone, and reached westward as far as the Garonne.

I pass on at once to the story of how the whole of the country from the Mediterranean to the North Sea and from the Atlantic to the Rhine was incorporated in the Empire of Rome.

In 59 B.C. Julius Cæsar was appointed to the government of Gaul (on both sides of the Alps) and Illyria. In the April of the next year he proceeded to take up his command. The first important operation which he undertook shows plainly enough how great a change had taken place in the relation between Rome and his barbarian neighbours of the north. The Helvetii, of whom we have heard in connection with the story of the Cimbri and Teutones, were in a restless condition. Their land (which we may roughly describe as the non-mountainous part of Switzerland and adjacent districts of France) was too narrow for them, and they resolved to look for another more fertile and more spacious. A hundred or even fifty years before they would certainly have moved southward, as kindred tribes had done under the First and the Second Brennus. But Italy no longer tempted them. It was as attractive as ever, but the way was too perilous. Accordingly, the migration of the Helvetii was

northward. Cæsar saw his opportunity. The Helvetii would have to pass through a corner of the Provincia, and they sent envoys asking his leave. Cæsar did not directly refuse their request, the truth being that he had not troops enough to stop them, if they were minded to force a passage. He put them off. He would give an answer shortly. When they came again his soldiers were ready and therefore his answer also. They must not go. The Helvetii then chose another way, but Cæsar is determined that they shall not go at all. They went, indeed, burning everything that they could not carry with them, but Cæsar pursued and overtook them. The battle that followed was long and fierce. It lasted from one o'clock in the afternoon to evening, and for all these hours no Roman saw the back of a foe. A barricade had been made of the waggons, and this was obstinately defended. At last the camp was taken, but as many as 130,000 men made their escape. They had three days' start, for Cæsar had to stay where he was so long, providing for the treatment of his wounded, and for the burial of his dead. But though the fugitives marched without resting day or night they could not get out of their enemy's reach. Couriers were sent

on, warning the tribes through whose territories they were to pass not to supply the Helvetii with food. To do so would be to incur the same penalty. This prompt and stern action had its immediate effect. The fugitives halted and sent back envoys begging for peace. Cæsar granted their request, but they were to give hostages, and to surrender their arms and all runaways and deserters. The men of one canton attempted to escape eastward, hoping that their flight might not be observed till it was too late to overtake them. But Cæsar observed everything; the unhappy men—there were six thousand of them—were brought back and slaughtered. The rest were admitted to quarter. They were compelled, however, to go back to their deserted country. Their neighbours, the Allobroges, were instructed to feed them till they could grow food for themselves, and they had to build again the houses which they had destroyed. Cæsar tells the story with a passionless accuracy. He shows neither anger nor pity. But the bare numbers which he gives are eloquent enough. There were 368,000 emigrants; 110,000 returned. More than two-thirds—men, women, and children—had perished. Anyhow, they could no longer complain that the land was too

narrow for them. But the spirit of unrest had reached to other tribes beside the Helvetii. The Germans from the eastern side of the Rhine had made their way into Gaul, under the command of their King Ariovistus. They had been invited to come by one tribe of Gauls to help them against another, but had soon made themselves odious both to friends and to foes. The particular tribe which had called them in had given up to them one-third of its land, and was now called upon to surrender another. Cæsar was called upon to help. The invitation was just what he wanted. To be the champion of Gaul was the first step towards being its master. Accordingly he informed the German king that he must let the friends of the Roman people alone. Ariovistus's answer was a defiance, and Cæsar's rejoinder was a rapid march eastwards. There was no time to be lost. Other tribes from beyond the Rhine were said to be on the move. Were these to join the first-comers, it would be a very formidable combination. Seven days' marching brought the Romans within twenty-four miles' distance of the enemy. There were negotiations which came to nothing, various strategic movements, with a cavalry skirmish now and then. Finally Cæsar made

an attack on the German host, and drove it before him to the Rhine. It suffered heavily in the flight. Ariovistus escaped, but he took very few of his Germans back with him.

In the following year (57 B.C.) Cæsar was engaged with the Belgæ in North-eastern Gaul. (Gaul must always be conceived of as the whole country to the westward of the Rhine.) He fought and won a great battle on the Aisne, falling on the enemy while they were endeavouring to cross the river, and inflicting a heavy loss on them. "They tried," says Cæsar, "in the most daring way to pass on the dead bodies of their own comrades." As he never puts anything in for the sake of effect, we may rely on the absolute truth of this gruesome picture. This victory was not easily won; a harder piece of work was the conflict with the Nervii that shortly followed. The Nervii occupied the country now known as Belgium, and had a high reputation for valour and for simplicity, not to say savagery, of life. They would not allow the importation of wine or any other foreign luxuries, and they were firmly resolved not to have any dealings with Cæsar. Their kinsmen and neighbours who had consented to treat with the Romans, had behaved, they considered, with much base-

ness and cowardice. The great battle was fought on the Sambre, and seems to have been, at one time, the most critical thing that Cæsar was ever engaged in.

Cæsar had been marching with his legions—he had eight in his force—each followed by its own baggage, and so far, therefore, separated from each other. The Nervii had been informed of this arrangement by some well-wishers in Cæsar's train, and had been advised to deliver their attack on the foremost legion as soon as the baggage came in sight. But the Roman general, who probably knew this, as great commanders have a way of knowing everything, altered his order on the way. First came the cavalry, then six legions together, all in light marching order, then the baggage, and bringing up the rear two newly levied legions. When the baggage came in sight the Nervii saw, as they thought, their opportunity. As a matter of fact, they had been waiting too long. They had to deal with six legions, not, as they expected, with one. Even then their onslaught came perilously near to a success. Emerging unexpectedly from the woods in which they had been lying hid, they drove before the Roman cavalry, and were engaged in hand-to-hand fight with the

legions almost before these knew what had happened. It was almost a surprise. "Cæsar," so he writes of himself, "had everything to do at once—to hoist the red flag that was the signal for battle, give the trumpet call, summon back to their places in the ranks the men who were collecting materials for the rampart, draw up the line, and address the troops." The enemy had been unexpectedly quick in their attack. On the other hand, the army was in thoroughly good order; every man knew what he had to do. But the time was very short. The men could not even don their helmets or get their shields out of their covers before the enemy was upon them. The tribesmen in alliance with the Nervii could not hold their own against the Romans, but the Nervii themselves for a time carried everything before them, breaking through the two legions that confronted them, and actually taking possession of the Roman camp. The camp followers fled in dismay, and were followed by some of the light-armed troops. Even a contingent of cavalry sent by the Treveri rode off the field, and carried with them the report that the day was lost. As the Treveri had a high reputation for courage, their flight was of the very worst omen.

At this critical moment Cæsar personally intervened, and restored the fortunes of the day. He seized a shield, addressed himself to the centurions, whose names, again after the fashion of the great general, he knew, and turned the tide of battle. Cæsar did not show himself so frequently in the front as was the habit of Alexander, but he could do it on occasion with the happiest effect. At the same time the officer in command of the tenth legion (Cæsar's *corps d'élite*, as we may call it), who had made a successful attack on the enemy's position, brought back that force to the help of his chief. The Nervii still resisted with the greatest courage. But the day was lost, and few of the tribe, so far, at least, as it had taken part in the battle, were left alive. An episode of the campaign is worth relating, though it had little or no effect on the general result. The force left by the Cimbri and Teutones to guard their spoil had after various wanderings found their way into this region. They asked and obtained terms from Cæsar, tried to outwit, and were, by way of punishment, sold as slaves.

The third campaign was carried on in Western Gaul, among the Veneti, represented by the Bretons of to-day. Cæsar had made a

requisition on them for corn, of which, as they were a seafaring people, they had probably little to spare. They refused the demand, which, indeed, he had no right but that of superior force to make, and even detained his envoys, whom they probably considered, and not without good reason, to be spies. Cæsar found that he wanted ships if he were to deal successfully with the Veneti. Accordingly he had a fleet built on the Loire, and manned with a levy raised in the neighbourhood. It was the First Punic War over again. The tribes of the western coast were beaten on their own element. As they had been guilty of what Cæsar chose to consider a great offence, an insult to ambassadors, he determined to punish them with unusual severity. Their chiefs were put to death; the rest of the population sold into slavery. A general surrender of the western tribes took place. Meanwhile one of the great man's lieutenants subdued the region between the Pyrenees and the Garonne (to the west, therefore, of the *Provincia*), and Cæsar himself spent what remained of the year in reducing some tribes in the north-east.

In the following year (B.C. 55) Northern Gaul was disturbed by another great movement of

population. Two German tribes, themselves dispossessed by the overpowering strength of the Suebi, a great confederation of kindred tribes from Eastern Germany, crossed the Rhine, and quartered themselves on the Menapii, a people which inhabited the left bank of the lower Rhine. Cæsar was well aware that the ill-affected Gauls would soon make common cause with the new-comers, and determined to be beforehand with his enemies of either race. He marched with great promptitude against them, not allowing himself to be put off by the negotiations which they desired or pretended to open with him. Before long a treacherous attack, made by the German horsemen on Cæsar's cavalry—chiefly composed, it would seem, of native levies—gave him an excellent justification for acting. He attacked the enemy, and drove them in headlong flight to the river. Many were slain in the fight and the pursuit, more were drowned in the river; the result was the almost entire destruction of the invading host. Nor did this satisfy him. He determined to make a demonstration of his strength in Germany itself. To do this he had to transport his army across the Rhine. To carry them over in boats did not, as he puts it, suit the dignity of the Roman people.

Possibly he thought it unsafe. Accordingly he built a bridge, a marvel of engineering skill, when we consider the breadth, depth, and force of the river to be spanned, and the short supply of tools and materials at hand. The work was complete in ten days; eighteen days more were spent in Germany. And Cæsar then came back, having certainly impressed the tribes beyond the Rhine with a great idea of his resources. Late in this year Cæsar made his first expedition to Britain. Of this and of the more serious invasion of the following year I shall have to speak elsewhere.

The year 54 B.C. was a very critical time. Cæsar evidently had overrated the result of his successes, a pardonable error, so rapid and apparently so complete had they been. A feeling of false security had suggested the somewhat romantic expedition to Britain, an expedition which he certainly would not have made if he had been aware of the real state of affairs in Gaul. He supposed that the country had been finally subdued—"pacified" or "quieted" was the Roman euphemism—but he was rudely undeceived. Fortunately for him he was in Gaul when the formidable rising, which he had soon to crush, took place. If he had been still in Britain, or if, as had been his

intention, he had started for the south, the consequences might have been more serious than they were.

The harvest in Gaul that year (B.C. 54) had been short. Hence it became necessary to scatter the legions in arranging for their winter quarters. There were eight legions, and the half of another, and they were located in eight camps. Two of these camps were in Normandy (Seez and Chartres), two in Picardy (Amiens and Montdidier), one in Artois (St. Pol), and three in Belgium (Charleroi, Tongres, and Lavacherie on the Ourthe). One of the last three, that at Tongres, which was under the command of two legates, Sabinus and Cotta, was attacked by a detachment from one of the tribes in the neighbourhood. Force not succeeding, treachery was tried. One of the local chiefs, Ambiorix by name, proposed a conference. He was friendly, he said, to the Romans, Cæsar having done him a kindness, though he had been compelled to pose as an enemy. His advice to the generals was to leave the camp, which it would not be possible to hold. A multitude of Germans had crossed the Rhine, and were on their way to attack the camp. If the troops were withdrawn to one of the other camps in Eastern Gaul, he would

guarantee them a safe-conduct. The two officers in command were divided in opinion. Finally Sabinus, who was in favour of evacuating the camp, had his way. At dawn next day they started ; after proceeding two miles they fell into an ambush. Forming into a circle they resisted, till the severity of their losses made them ask for terms. These were granted, and immediately broken. Sabinus and some officers laid down their arms and were massacred ; Cotta died fighting ; the survivors of the day's battle made their way back into the camp. Seeing that they could not possibly hold it against the enemy, they committed suicide during the night. A few stragglers escaped to the camp at Lavacherie, where Labienus was in command.

The camp at Charleroi, in the country of the Nervii, where Q. Cicero, younger brother of the great orator, was in command, was next attacked. The Gauls, now largely increased in number, assaulted it with the greatest fury, but were repulsed. Cæsar was informed of the position of affairs, and acted with his usual promptitude. He was able to concentrate a force of two legions, and with these he promptly relieved Cicero, having inflicted a severe defeat on a force of Gauls which attacked him on the way.

The next year (53 B.C.) was entirely devoted to exacting vengeance for the massacre of Sabinus and Cotta with their men. It is needless to follow the operations of Cæsar. It must suffice to say that though one somewhat serious reverse was sustained, they were successful on the whole. But much yet remained to be done before Gaul could be said to have been thoroughly "pacified." Cæsar was yet to be reduced to greater straits than he had yet experienced.

The year 52 B.C. was one of furious party strife in Rome, and Cæsar gives us clearly to understand that this state of things had its effect on the Gauls. Chafing under the newly imposed yoke, they naturally exaggerated the troubles of their masters. In one matter in particular, their "wish was father to their thought." They dreaded, and with excellent reason, the commanding personality of Cæsar. He had done in seven years more than his predecessors had been able to accomplish in seventy. What an inestimable advantage it would be if he were to be kept away from the scene of war by these party quarrels! The report that this was the case was spread about and eagerly believed. In a very short time all Gaul was in a blaze of revolt, the news spread-

ing with extraordinary rapidity. What had happened at Gennabum (Orleans) at sunrise was known in the country of the Auverni, nearly 150 miles away, before 9 p.m. It was shouted from field to field.

Vercingetorix, an Auvernian, was the hero of the new movement. All the tribes of Western Gaul joined him immediately. He began his own operations in the south-west on the borders of the old *Provincia*. While occupied with them, Cæsar suddenly appeared on the scene, bringing with him new levies from the other side of the Alps. His coming caused an immediate change in the aspect of affairs. Moving with his usual speed, he concentrated his army at Sens (80 miles to the south-east of Paris). He then proceeded to attack one after another of the revolting tribes. His successes were so numerous and so rapid that Vercingetorix felt that he must change his plan of campaign. Unable to meet Cæsar in the field, he must starve him out. To do this it was necessary to lay the whole country waste. Even the towns would have to be burnt. Only the policy, to be useful, had to be thorough. This was more than Vercingetorix could effect. When it came to the question of destroying Avaricum (*Bourges*) he had to give way. Its inhabitants

pleaded for it too earnestly, for it was the finest city in Gaul. If it had been burnt with all the stores that it contained the Roman campaign must have ended in disaster. As it was, the town was besieged by Cæsar. The Gallic chief, who had his camp sixteen miles away, did all he could to annoy and injure the besiegers. But he could not stop them. He threw 10,000 men into the city, but though the defence was prolonged, the skill and determination of the Romans would not be denied. When the prospect seemed desperate the garrison resolved to leave the city, but the shrieks of the women revealed their intention to the besiegers. Finally Avaricum was stormed, and all its inhabitants massacred.

Great as was this disaster, Vercingetorix felt his position to be strengthened by it. He could now say to his countrymen, "Avaricum has perished, after all, but the Romans have got the stores." Cæsar's next proceeding was to lay siege to Gergovia, a town which cannot be identified. Here he met with a decided reverse. One division of his army persisted in an attack upon the walls after the recall had been sounded, and were repulsed with heavy loss, 700 men, of whom nearly fifty were officers, falling in the action. Cæsar himself

seems to have had a narrow escape. He does not mention it himself, not thinking, perhaps, that it was of sufficient importance to be recorded. But Servius, an ancient commentator on Virgil, relates it on the authority of a Diary (*Ephemeris*) which was extant in his time. In Virgil, Tarchon, an Etrurian chief and ally of Æneas, drags one Venulus, in full armour, from off his horse. The same thing, he says, happened to Cæsar at Gergovia. One of the Gauls recognised him as he was being carried away, and shouted out *Cæsar!* The name was very like the Gallic words for "Let him go!" And Cæsar's captor relaxing his hold, the great man escaped. Plutarch tells another story of how the Auverni had a sword hanging up in one of their temples which they declared to be Cæsar's, and that when it was shown to him, he smiled. Nor was the defeat at Gergovia the last of his troubles. The Ædui, who had been loyal to Rome from the beginning, now joined the rebellion. They seized Cæsar's *dépôt* at Noviodunum (site unknown), slaughtered the garrison, and possessed themselves of the stores, and with them, of the hostages, who were pledges of the fidelity of the other tribes. They then tried to stop him from crossing the Loire. As usual, he was too

quick for them. His legions forded the river, though the river, swollen with the melted snows, was breast-high.

Labienus, who was operating in the neighbourhood of Paris, had had difficulties of his own, but had surmounted them with his usual skill. He was Cæsar's ablest lieutenant, as useful to his chief as Lord Hill was to Wellington in the Peninsula. He now succeeded in joining the main army. Notwithstanding this addition of strength, the Roman commander was compelled to retreat. He was not far from the *Provincia* when he turned upon Vercingetorix and defeated him, largely by the help of the German cavalry. The Romans, among other qualifications of a ruling race, had the gift of turning to the best account the qualities of others. Eight or nine years before there was not a trooper of German race in the Roman army; now that nation furnishes it with an efficient arm.

Vercingetorix now threw himself into Alesia, a strong place in the hills, probably to be identified with Alise-Sainte-Reine in Burgundy. He sent messengers to the various States in alliance, asking for a *levée-en-masse*. This was not made, but a huge army was gathered, 250,000 infantry and 8,000 horse. It was the

last great effort of Gaul for freedom, and it failed. The Gauls came on, convinced that they must triumph, but the Romans stood firm during a struggle that lasted from noon till sunset, and the enemy were driven back to their camp. Another attack, made after a brief rest, failed also. Then came the last desperate struggle. One of the chiefs of the relieving army, a kinsman of Vercingetorix, threw himself on a weak spot in the lines of investment, where the Roman camp had been constructed on ground that sloped towards the town. He had 60,000 men with him; the Roman force consisted of two legions. The besieged made a simultaneous effort to break out. The struggle was long and fierce. Cæsar directed the Roman battle from a point of advantage. When the time came, he himself, conspicuous in the scarlet cloak of command, took personal part in the struggle. His trusted lieutenant Labienus got together forty cohorts from all parts of the lines of investment, and Cæsar put himself at their head. The Gallic host was utterly broken. The slaughter on the field was great, and the survivors dispersed during the night that followed, every man seeking his native State. The next day Vercingetorix surrendered himself to the conqueror. He was

kept in prison for seven years, was led in the triumph which Cæsar celebrated in 45 B.C. and put to death afterwards. The war in Gaul lasted for two years more. One after another the rebellious States were subdued, and dealt with mercifully or severely as policy dictated. Cæsar, who recognised the duty, or, anyhow, the policy, of forgiveness where his countrymen were concerned, was wholly proof against any emotion of the kind when he had to do with barbarians. He had no pleasure in a massacre ; but, on the other hand, it caused him no compunction or even pain. These eight years of war must have cost Gaul some two millions of lives. It was an awful price to pay, but it completed a great work, which had been on hand for three centuries and a half. In 390 B.C. Brennus captured Rome ; in 50 B.C. the Gauls had become the Latin people which they are to-day.

VII

FURTHEST BRITAIN.

I CANNOT omit all mention of our own island, though it can hardly be said that there was any incident in its history of really critical importance in the long struggle between Rome and the barbarian tribes.

The visits of Cæsar to Britain, though highly interesting in more ways than one, may be briefly passed over. He came for the first time not long before the end of the campaigning season in 55 B.C. His chief reason, as he states it himself, was that he found that the Britons were in the habit of helping their neighbours of Gaul. (The inhabitants of south-eastern England were of the same race as the Belgæ.) We do not find, as a matter of fact, any mention of British auxiliaries in the Gallic armies, or that in later years Gaul was tempted into rebellion by the knowledge that Britain

was free. Cæsar was of the Alexander type, strongly moved by the ambition of a conqueror. The first visit lasted altogether about three weeks, and the army practically remained where it landed.

The second visit took place in the following year (54 B.C.) and was a far more important affair. Cæsar's intention was, we may be sure, to conquer the island. Probably he was not acquainted with its real dimensions, and circumstances occurred that made him change his plans. Originally, however, he had in his mind something more than a *reconnaissance en force*. He brought with him six legions and 2,000 cavalry, more than a half of his whole available force, coming at the end of July, and leaving about the middle of September. He advanced some sixty or seventy miles into the country, crossing the Thames, possibly near Weybridge, possibly a little below Eton. The Britons could not, of course, stand against him in the field, but they proved themselves to be formidable enemies. Cæsar does not expressly say that he had underrated the difficulties of the task; but he acted as if he had. He was engaged in Gaul for five more years, and during the last two of these five was practically master of the country, but he seems

to have entirely abandoned the idea of subjugating Britain.

For 89 years the island was left practically to itself. Augustus, in the scroll of his achievements which he inscribed on a slab in a temple at Ancyra (the capital of the Roman province of Galatia) mentions the tribute paid by certain British kings; the inscription is imperfect at this place, and we know no particulars. It is certain, however, that no serious attempt was made on Britain between the years 54 B.C. and 43 A.D. There are various allusions to the people in the literature of the time, but they are always spoken of as savage enemies of whom very little was known.

In 43 A.D., however, Rome, at the invitation of a native prince, who conceived himself to have suffered wrong, seriously undertook the conquest of the Island. Aulus Plautius was appointed to the command, took four legions with him, and in the course of the year the Emperor himself (Claudius) brought over an additional force. A great battle was fought near Camalodunum (Colchester), in which the Britons were, as usual, defeated. Vespasian, afterwards Emperor, was actively engaged in the west of the Island. We know very little of the details of the campaigns which followed.

One heroic figure, however, stands prominently out. This is Caractacus (Caradoc). For seven years this prince (elder son of Cunobelin, the *Cymbeline* of Shakespeare) held out against the Roman forces. We cannot identify the scene of the final battle,¹ but a sufficiently clear description of it has been preserved. The Britons occupied a hill which had an unfordable river in front, and was itself fortified, wherever the ground permitted or required it, with ramparts of stones. So formidable did the position, crowded as it was with warriors, seem to the Roman general, that he was inclined to manœuvre, probably to attempt a flanking movement. But the soldiers demanded to be led to a frontal attack, and their general yielded. The river was crossed, how we are not told. The space between the river and the British ramparts was not traversed without loss. Many were wounded and some killed by a storm of missiles from the British lines. But when the *testudo* was formed under the rampart, rudely constructed of uncemented stones, the battle was practically over. The rampart was soon pulled down, and the Britons retired to the heights. Here they were outmatched.

¹ It was probably somewhere in Shropshire or Herefordshire.

The artillery played upon them from a distance, and they had nothing wherewith to reply to it. In close combat the armour and weapons of the legions gave them an immense advantage. Finally the Britons were driven headlong from their position. Caractacus' wife and daughter were captured, and his brothers surrendered themselves. The king himself was handed over to his enemies by the treachery of a neighbouring potentate, Queen Cartismandua. The story of his dignified behaviour before Claudius, and of the generous spirit with which it was taken, need not be repeated here. Roman manners had been somewhat softened since the days when the brave Vercingetorix had been put to death. It was not that Caractacus had ceased to be formidable; he was never allowed to return to Britain.

Nor need I tell in detail the story of the revolt of Boadicea, Queen of the Iceni, a tribe of Eastern Britain. It was provoked by the insolence of Roman officials and the greed of Roman financiers,¹ and for a time it shook

¹ According to Dion, the philosopher Seneca had something to do with the disturbance by suddenly calling in money which he had lent at usurious interest. We may hope that it is a slander, but Romans of good repute were not above such conduct. The patriotic Brutus lent money

the Roman power in Britain to its base. Londinium, already the largest and wealthiest town in Britain, though not ranking as a colony, was sacked; so was Verulamium (St. Alban's) and other places. As many as seventy thousand persons are said to have perished. The majority must have been Britons, "friendly natives," as we should now call them; but there were many Italians among them. "Citizens and allies" is the historian's term. As only seventeen years had passed since the conquest of Britain had commenced, it is remarkable how far the Romanising of the country had proceeded. Traders and settlers must have swarmed into it, as they do in the United States when an Indian reserve is thrown open. Besides these frightful massacres, there were military disasters. One legion was cut to pieces. The commander of another was so cowed that he did not venture out of his camp. But Paullinus, the commander-in-chief, behaved with consummate discretion. He refused to risk a battle with insufficient forces, though his delay meant the destruction of London. But when he struck

to a town in Cyprus at 40 per cent., and was much annoyed with Cicero for refusing the help of the military in collecting the debt.

he struck with terrific force. The British army was practically annihilated. In Southern Britain, at least, the dominion of Rome was never seriously threatened for many years after the great victory won by Paullinus.

When, in A.D. 78, Agricola took over the command of Britain, it was in North Wales that he carried on his first campaign. The campaigns that followed I need not describe in detail. The last of them was finished by a great victory over the Caledonians near the Grampians, probably at Aberfoyle, in Perthshire. The Roman sway, however, did not really extend so far. Its high-water mark was, probably, reached about A.D. 200, when the Emperor Septimius Severus marched to the extreme north of the Island, and on his return added a second wall to the great rampart constructed by Antoninus Pius between the estuaries of the Forth and the Clyde. But this advanced post was not long held. The most permanent, as it was the most elaborate barrier against the northern tribes, was the Great Wall built by Hadrian, about A.D. 120, between the Solway Firth and Newcastle-on-Tyne. Britain south of this was completely Latinised. But the existence of the walls and the fact that the

Island had the reputation of being to the Empire what India is to us, a nursery of captains, prove that the North was practically independent. Here then—and this is what makes Britain really important in Roman history—was the furthest limit of Roman advance. And it was here that the first overt confession of weakness had to be made. In A.D. 408 one of the many soldiers of fortune who attempted to seize the Imperial throne crossed over into Gaul with the British legions. The legions never came back, and Britain, though nominally included in the Provinces of the Empire, was actually abandoned.

VIII

BEYOND THE RHINE

IN the German tribes Rome found at last the antagonist who was to vanquish her. The victories of Marius and of Cæsar had been complete, but they did not crush the race. Their numbers and the solidity of their character, moulded as it was by a tenacity and a power of resistance which neither the Spaniard nor the Gaul had shown, made them practically unconquerable. The early Empire was not without ambitions in this direction. Drusus, the step-son of Augustus, carried on several campaigns in Lower Germany, and executed besides some important engineering works, in the way of canals and embankments, which were intended to make the country more accessible. But he came, once at least, very near to a terrible disaster. In B.C. 11 he had got as far as the

Weser, thanks, in part at least, to the absence of his most formidable enemies, the Sicambri, who were busy fighting with the Chatti. At the Weser he felt that it would be prudent to halt and to retrace his steps. It was well that he did, for the Sicambri had settled their quarrel with their neighbours, and were now in the opposite ranks. At a place called Arbalo, which we have no means of locating, he was almost surrounded. The allied tribes threw away, by their rashness, a victory which was almost in their hands. They divided, so to speak, the Roman wolfskin before they had captured the wolf. Each tribe chose its own share of the spoil, rushed in a headlong charge to secure it, and were driven back with heavy loss, Drusus built two forts which might be convenient centres for future operations, and returned to Rome, where he had so much of the honours of a triumph as the jealousy of the Emperor permitted a subject to enjoy. In the following year (B.C. 10) he returned to the same country, and in B.C. 9 he did the very same thing again, It was in this campaign that he reached his furthest point, making his way as far as the Elbe itself. Here indeed—so it seemed to the men of the time—was the fate-appointed limit of the Roman arms. As he was making ready

to cross the Elbe, a female figure, of more than human proportions, appeared to him. "Whither goest thou, insatiable Drusus?" cried the strange apparition. "Destiny forbids thee to go further. Here is the end of thy exploits and thy life." He erected trophies on the river bank to mark the spot which he had reached, and turned back. But he never reached the Rhine. He was thrown from his horse, and received injuries from which he died. His younger brother Tiberius arrived just in time to see him alive. The last duties to the dead performed—Tiberius is said to have walked before the bier all the way from the Rhine bank to Rome—he returned to prosecute the campaign. For some years the Roman arms met no serious check, and by A.D. 9 so much had been done in subjugating the country that Augustus conceived the idea of making it into a Roman province. For this purpose he sent an officer of high rank, who had for some years administered the province of Syria—Quintilius Varus. The new-comer was totally mistaken about the real condition of the country, which was on the brink of revolt. The native chiefs, at whose head was the famous Arminius (the Latin form of *Hermann*), pretended friendship and submis-

sion, assisting at the courts which he held after the fashion of an Indian *durbah*, and promptly executing his orders. The report of an insurrection in South Germany reached him while thus employed, and he marched southward to quell it. Arminius and his fellow-countrymen left him, under a promise to return, but really with the intention of preparing an attack. His road lay through the valleys of what is now called the Teutoburgerwald Wald, between Osnabruck and Paderborn, in Westphalia. He marched without any suspicion of danger, his army in a straggling line, encumbered with baggage and a multitude of non-combatants. Half-way through the pass they were attacked. There were three legions and a considerable force of cavalry, and for a time they successfully resisted the enemy. The camp which they pitched at the end of the first day's battle was of such a size, when it was discovered some years afterwards, as to show that the three legions were then substantially intact. The next day, after destroying his baggage, for he recognised that his position was one of extreme peril and that his only hope was to give to his army all the mobility possible, he made for the fortress of Aliso on the Lippe.

All the day he was attacked, and had to struggle for every yard of road. By evening his forces had been greatly diminished, for the second camp was seen to be much smaller than the first. The third day's march brought them out of the woods, but only to encounter a fresh multitude of the enemy. Their strength was now exhausted, and they could no longer keep their ranks. Varus killed himself; his army, a very few excepted who contrived to reach Aliso, was destroyed. The effect in Germany was to throw back the frontier of Rome to the Rhine; in Rome the news produced something like a panic.. The disaster embittered the remaining years of Augustus. Again and again he was known to start from his sleep and cry in tones of agony, "Quintilius Varus, give me back my legions!"

Rome could not, of course, submit to such a defeat without vindicating her honour. This was not an easy task. In A.D. 14, Germanicus, the son of Drusus, marched into the country with a powerful force. He narrowly escaped disaster. Had not the divisions between the German chiefs hindered them from following up their successes—both Germanicus and his lieutenant, Cæcina, suffered serious reverses—

he might have met with the fate of Varus. In the campaign of 16 he was more fortunate, and, if the Roman narratives are not exaggerated, restored the old frontiers. Arminius himself was nearly taken, and Northern Germany, between the Rhine and the Elbe, was once again Roman. But Tiberius did not like a "forward" policy. Tacitus, who abhorred the man, tells us that his motive was a mean jealousy of Germanicus, but it is likely that he saw that the resources of the Empire might be better expended. Anyhow, Germanicus was recalled, and Germany recovered her freedom; nor was any serious attempt again made, as far as the northern part of the country was concerned, to reassert the authority of Rome. It was to the south that Rome limited her efforts for dominion.

IX

THE LAST ADVANCE

WHEN Tacitus speaks of the *urgentia imperii fata*, the irresistible destinies of empire, he uses a phrase which every Englishman understands. A great empire cannot stand still. Its adventurous subjects are always pressing forward, and must be protected. Its neighbours are continually feeling and resenting the pressure which it exercises upon them. It has to defend boundaries which represent to those who are outside them a series of aggressions, and it has to satisfy the warlike tastes of the huge force which it has to keep under arms. Augustus had done his best to limit the growth of the Empire. His testament to his successors was an injunction, it would be better, perhaps, to say a counsel, that no new dominions should be sought. Tiberius religiously observed this advice. But the

Cæsars that followed Tiberius found the circumstances of the situation too much for them. Caligula made an expedition against the nations yet unsubdued beyond the northern frontier, which might have been serious but for his own lunatic folly. Claudius began the subjugation of Britain, which was carried to a conclusion by the brilliant generalship of Agricola in the reign of Domitian. Domitian was not so fortunate in his other great enterprise. This was the invasion of Dacia. Agricola was still alive, but Domitian was too jealous of his abilities and his renown to entrust to him the management of the campaign. He found a substitute in the person of Cornelius Fuscus, Prefect of the Prætorians, who had at least the recommendation of being a subservient courtier. Juvenal includes Fuscus among the counsellors who were summoned to discuss the important question of how the gigantic turbot which a fisherman had presented to the Emperor should be cooked. He seems to have been a student of the military art, for he is described as "planning battles in his marble halls." Possibly he wrote a book on the subject. In the field he seems to have had little or no capacity. The Dacian chief, Decebalus by name, enticed the Roman general to cross the Danube, turned

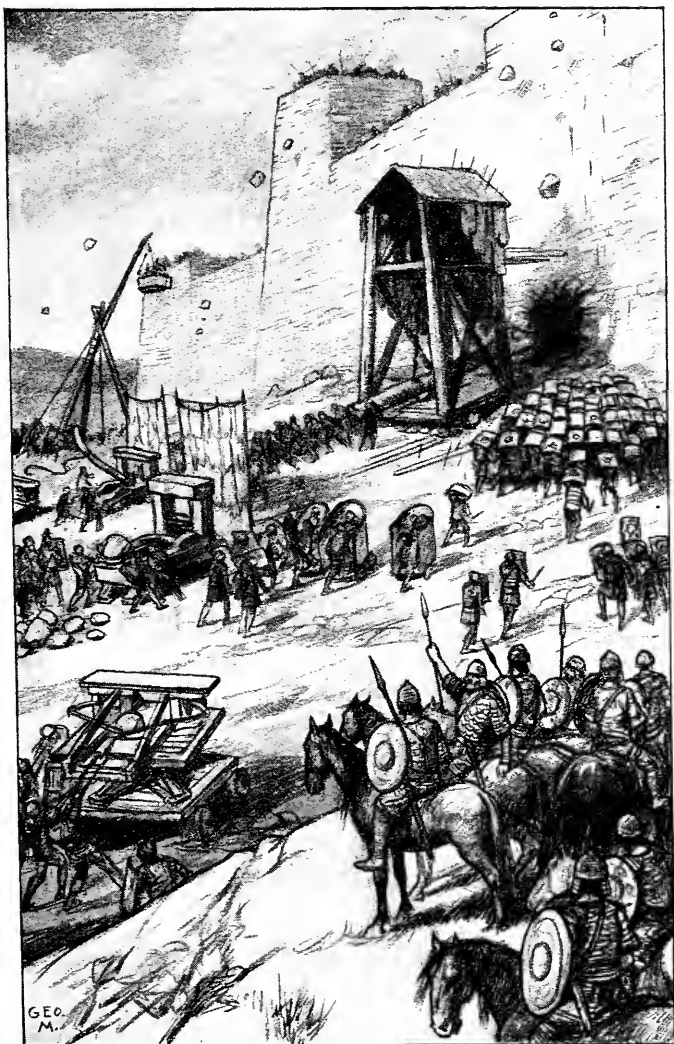
on him when the opportunity came, and defeated him with the loss of at least one legion and its exile. We have absolutely no record of the battle. It came within the period of events covered by the histories of Tacitus, but the book which contained the narrative is lost. Even did we possess it, we should still be ignorant of one important detail, for Orosius, who had the narrative before him, tells us that Tacitus held it to be the part of a good citizen to conceal the losses suffered by the armies of Rome. The whole story is wrapped in obscurity. It is said that the defeat of Fuscus was retrieved in the next campaign by his successor Julianus. But again we have no details. There is even to be found the statement, whether well or ill-founded we cannot say, that the Dacians exacted from Rome an annual sum of money as the price of their forbearance.

It was to Dacia then that Trajan turned his thoughts when he found himself seated on the imperial throne. Trajan had many reasons for undertaking the enterprise. It was much to his taste. He was a soldier, who had already distinguished himself in the field. And he had to justify his elevation to the throne. The Empire really rested on the swords of the

soldiers, and no man who could not count on the respect of the army could feel himself safe. And there was also the cogent reason that it was easier to attack than to defend, that the barbarians, if left to themselves, would sooner or later invade the Empire, and that the wisest plan would be to assume the offensive,

Trajan was busied with protecting the German frontier of the Empire when he received the news that he had been adopted by the aged Nerva. He spent a year, after receiving the tidings, in completing the preparation for its defence. Then he went to take up his new dignity. Home affairs settled, he started for the Danube. Of the campaigns which followed we know little in one way, and much in another. We know, from the sculptures on Trajan's Column, exactly what arms and armour, and what engines of war were used by the soldiers of Rome. But as to the strategy of the campaign, and its chief incidents, we are almost wholly in the dark.

Trajan crossed the Danube at two places without molestation. At first it seemed as if the Dacians were going to give in without a struggle. An embassy arrived to beg for peace, offering surrender without conditions. But this was a palpable imposture. The envoys



TRAJAN BESIEGING A DACIAN FORT.

were men of low rank—so much Trajan knew from the habits of the country—for they were bareheaded. The next envoys were certainly nobles, but they had no real authority to treat. The Dacian king, Decebalus by name, was simply trying to gain time. Not long after he fell upon the legions as they marched. A fierce battle followed, in which the Dacians were defeated, but at a heavy cost. The Romans still advanced; when they were near his chief stronghold, Decebalus again gave battle. This time he was beaten even more decisively than before. For the time his spirit was broken. The envoys whom he now sent were nobles of the highest rank, who came into Trajan's presence with their hands bound behind their backs in token of absolute submission. Decebalus himself consented to pay his homage to Trajan in person, and to send deputies to Rome to arrange conditions of peace. This was in 102 A.D.

Scarcely had Trajan turned his back—his presence being much wanted at Rome—when the Dacians were in arms again. Decebalus's own hereditary kingdom lay far to the east, in what is now called Transylvania, but nothing could stop the march of the Roman legions. They made their way over river and mountain,

and stormed stronghold after stronghold. At last Decebalus, in despair, put an end to his own life. The new province of Dacia was thoroughly organised, for Trajan was as great an administrator as a soldier. To this day the remains of the great works which his engineers and architects raised at his bidding remain to testify to the completeness with which the work was done. For more than a century and a half it remained one of the most orderly and civilised of the Roman provinces. It was not till 275 A.D. that Aurelian withdrew the legions to the southern bank of the Danube.

During the time of the Good Emperor¹ Rome kept her dominions unimpaired. Even under their weaker successors, though decay was at work within, her power for awhile was not visibly shaken. It was with the appearance of the Goths upon the scene that the end began.

¹ It began with Nerva in 96 A.D. and ended with the death of Marcus Aurelius in 180.

BOOK VI

ROME AND THE BARBARIANS THE DECLINE

I. A CENTURY OF DISGRACE

ONE of the strangest facts in history is the rapid decline of Roman power that set in immediately after the Empire had enjoyed such a succession of good rulers as had never before fallen to its lot. The period of eighty-four years which began with the accession of Nerva and ended with the death of Marcus Aurelius has always been regarded, and rightly regarded, as the golden age of Rome. Trajan was, it is true, a warlike Emperor by choice, and Marcus Aurelius the same by necessity, but Rome had never had since its founding any but the briefest intervals of peace. War, in short, was its natural condition, and it had seldom been carried on with more success than it was by

Trajan in Dacia and by Aurelius against the Quadi and the Marcomanni. On the other hand, the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius (117-161) made up together forty-four years, considerably more than what is usually reckoned as a generation, of almost unbroken peace. Yet the good effects of nearly a century of wise rule seemed to vanish almost immediately when the last of the "Good Emperors" passed away. It is true that Aurelius had a deplorably weak and vicious successor.¹ But Commodus was not more contemptible than Caligula, Nero, or Domitian, and Rome had survived their rule without much apparent injury. Some writers have found a cause in a succession of plagues which raged throughout the Empire with an almost unexampled severity, and it is true that the century which followed the year 165² was terribly distinguished by this visitation, but no external calamities are sufficient to account

¹ It is remarkable that the most philosophic of the "Good Emperors" departed from the rule of adoption which had apparently been so beneficial to Rome, and left the succession to his son, of whose real character he could hardly have been ignorant. Gibbon, however, thinks that the want of the hereditary principle was one of the great causes of the troubles of the Empire.

² In 165 the legions returning from the East are said to have brought the Oriental plague into Europe.

for a nation's decay. These causes are to be sought elsewhere, within rather than without, in the life of men more than in the calamities which years of famine or of pestilence inflict upon them. And it is clearly beyond my province to do more than indicate them in the very briefest way. We see signs of what was going on in days when to all appearance the Empire was most flourishing, while it was certainly still pursuing its career of conquest. Virgil writes a great poem to commend the honest healthy toil of a country life to a generation which had ceased to care for it. The cities were more and more crowded, for the luxuries which they put within the reach of even the poorest were more and more sought after, but the country was passing into a desert or a pleasure ground. The farmers or peasants who had formed the backbone of Roman armies had ceased to be ; their fields, where they had not gone out of cultivation, were tilled by huge gangs of slaves. Provincial towns which in old days had been strong enough to make treaties on equal terms with Rome were now half in ruins, with a scanty population that barely contrived to exist. With every year things grew worse and worse. And the Empire aggravated the evils which at first it had

done much to palliate if not to remedy. It had superseded the Republic, because this had become utterly corrupt; but in time it became as corrupt itself, and for the corruption of a despotism there is no cure. A succession of able rulers put off the end for a time, but it had to come. And when it came there came with it more vigorous races out of whom was to be formed by degrees, not without help of the old order which they swept away, a new civilisation.

Commodus, the unworthy son and successor of the good Aurelius, reigned but for a short time. He was assassinated in his thirty-second year. With his death began, it may be said, the rule of the sword. His successor, indeed, Pertinax by name, was chosen by the Senate, and well deserved his election, but he reigned for something less than ninety days, and the Prætorians, the soldiers of the capital, murdered him and sold the throne openly to the highest bidder. To this arrogance the legions in the provinces refused to submit. The principal armies put up candidates of their own. We need not follow the succession of these short-lived rulers. It will suffice to say that in the hundred and five years which intervened between the death of Aurelius and the accession of Diocletian (180-285) there

were no less than twenty Emperors, not to mention innumerable Pretenders—it was said that at one time thirty¹ claimed the throne.

For a time the spectacle of the Roman armies engaged in almost incessant struggles with each other does not seem to have produced the effect which might have been expected on the tribes outside the frontiers of the Empire. No movement of any importance among the barbarians is recorded during the fifty years which followed the murder of Pertinax by the Prætorians. In 209, indeed, the Britons of the north attacked the Roman province, and were punished, without any lasting effect, by Septimius Severus. But the event was of no particular importance, for the North Britons were not powerful enough, even if they had succeeded, to seriously affect the course of events. Causes with which we are not exactly acquainted kept the far more formidable tribes of Germany inactive. We hear of a combination among them in the reign of Aurelius which might well have become dangerous, if, to use the language of Gibbon, it included all the nations from the mouth of the Rhine to the mouth of the Danube. But it came to nothing. The tribes which first took the field were

¹ Gibbon reduces the number to *nineteen*.

defeated. Discouragement and dissension kept the others inactive. Dissension, indeed, was the most potent influence which worked in favour of the Romans. In his remarkable treatise on Germany and its tribes Tacitus gives a description of the people which emphasises their superiority in many important respects to the degenerate sons of Rome. But he speaks with satisfaction of the internal strife which prevented them from becoming formidable, mentioning one great conflict in which one tribe had been wholly destroyed by its neighbours, and adds, "While the destinies of Empire hurry us on, fortune can give us no greater boon than discord among our foes."

But this state of things naturally would not last. It would cease when some chief of commanding ability and strong personal influence should come to the front, or when some tribe should become so powerful as to attract or compel its neighbours to unite with it. Such a tribe came upon the scene later on in the first half of the third century of our era. The *Gothi*, to use the most common of the various forms of their name, are first mentioned many centuries before the time of which I am now speaking. Pytheas, of Marseilles, who travelled in Northern Europe about the time of Alexan-

der the Great, speaks of them as inhabiting the coasts of the Baltic, and Tacitus, writing about 90 A.D., locates them in much the same district. A hundred years or so after this date, however, they are spoken of as dwelling near the Black Sea. We need not trouble ourselves, however, with their place of abode, nor yet with the question of their race. Some writers hold that they were of the Slavonic family, not the Teutonic. That there were some Slavs in the great multitude which the Romans knew by the common name of Goths is more than probable. In just the same way there was a Celtic element in the great Teutonic swarm which had so nearly overrun Italy at the close of the second century B.C. But all that we know about them, whether as regards their habits or their appearance, would lead us to think that they were Germans.

Some time, therefore, about 247 A.D., the Goths invaded and overran the province of Dacia. Crossing the Danube into Mæsia¹ (Bulgaria) they besieged its capital town, now known by the name of Pravadi (twenty-five miles to the west of Varna). The town was ill-protected, for with the whole province of Dacia between it and the frontier of the Empire

¹ The Eastern division of the province.

it anticipated no danger. The inhabitants saw nothing better to do than to buy off the enemy by the payment of a large ransom. Such a policy is seldom successful, as we know from the history of our own island, where the plan of buying off the Danes was tried again and again to very little purpose. The Goths departed, and before long came back again.

Decius, who had by this time supplanted Philip the Arabian on the imperial throne, on receiving the news of this second invasion, marched to the relief of the provinces attacked. He found the barbarians besieging Nicopoli (on the southern bank of the Danube). On his approach they promptly raised the siege, marched across Mæsia and made their way over the Balkans with the intention of attacking Philippopolis. Decius followed them, without apparently taking due precautions against surprise, for the Goths turned upon him, and routed his army. His forces were so shattered that he could not attempt to help Philippopolis, which not very long afterwards was taken by storm and sacked.

Decius, though he had made a disastrous mistake, was a brave and capable soldier. He took prompt measures to retrieve his defeat, guarding the places where the Danube could be

crossed and the Balkan passes so as to prevent reinforcements from reaching the Goths. These, on their part, had suffered severely. The siege and storms had cost them many lives ; their supplies were running short, for they carried no stores with them, and could draw but little sustenance from a country which they had wasted. And they were much alarmed at the prospect of having their retreat cut off. Under these circumstances they offered to surrender all their booty and all their prisoners, if they were permitted to return unharmed to their own country. Decius refused to accept the offer. He probably thought, and had some reason for thinking, that no agreement could be profitably made with barbarians. The only way to deal with the Goths was to deal with them as Marius had dealt with the Cimbri and Teutones. The invaders prepared to fight. The battle that followed was obstinately contested. The Goths were drawn up in three lines—we may observe from the first indications of a certain military skill and training in the tribe—the third of which was protected by a morass. The first and the second of these were broken ; the third stood firm, and repulsed all the attacks of the legions. The Emperor's son had fallen early

in the day ; of the fate of Decius himself nothing was ever known. What is certain is that the army was almost annihilated. The Goths were able to make their way home without losing their spoil or their prisoners. They even received a great sum for promising not to molest again the provinces of Rome, till, of course—for such must have been the proviso understood on both sides—they should find it convenient to do so. This battle lacks a name, for the place where it was fought cannot be identified, but it was an event of the greatest importance. Rome had suffered worse disasters before, but never one that entailed so great a loss of credit. A barbarian army destroys a provincial capital, defeats two armies, slays the Emperor himself, and returns home, not only with all its booty, but with a heavy bribe with which its forbearance had been purchased. Clearly this was the beginning of the end.

For some years after their campaigns in the region of the Danube, the Goths occupied themselves with expeditions which bear a curious resemblance to those made by their kinsmen of later times, the Vikings and Northmen. They do not seem to have had any seamanship of their own, but they lured or compelled the maritime population of the

Black Sea coast-line to assist them. Their first voyage was eastward. They sailed along the northern coast of the Black Sea, taking Pitsunda on their way, rounded the eastern end, and finally captured Trebizond, the wealthiest city in northern Asia Minor, where they possessed themselves of a vast quantity of spoil and a multitude of prisoners. Their next voyage had a westerly direction. They overran the province of Bithynia. The famous towns of Nicala and Nicomedia, among others, fell into their hands, almost without any attempt at resistance. It was more than three centuries since these regions had known the presence of a foreign enemy. They had no troops of their own, except, possibly, some local levies which certainly had had no experience of warfare, and the legions which should have defended them had sadly degenerated both in courage and in discipline. The third expedition of the Goths took them outside the Black Sea into the Ægean. Their fleet sailed into the Piræus. Athens, which had not attempted, possibly had not been permitted, to repair its walls, demolished more than three hundred years before by Sulla, was taken and plundered. Greece could offer no resistance. It had neither means nor men. The invaders still

advanced westwards, and threatened Italy itself. Here, however, their progress was stayed. But from this expedition also, audacious as it was, they returned in safety. It gave another proof, not less significant than the death of Decius, how low the Empire had already fallen.

While the Goths were evading the south-eastern provinces of the Empire, other enemies were busy in the north and west. The Franks now make their first appearance in history. The name which meets us frequently in the modern world, notably in France, and in such terms as Franconia, Frankfort, Frankenthal, means the "free," and probably originated in a combination of the tribes who inhabited the eastern bank of the Rhine, and who assumed this title by way of distinguishing themselves from the subjects of Rome on the opposite side of the river. The Franks laid waste the province of Gaul, crossed the Pyrenees and desolated Spain. We know very little of the details of their invasion. One of the so-called "Thirty Tyrants," Postumus by name, is said to have checked their progress, and done something to protect the Roman provinces of the West. Postumus was slain in 267 A.D.

This date belongs to the period of extreme

depression which coincides with the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus. Valerian was a favourite lieutenant of the Emperor Decius, and seems to have been a man of high character and ability. But circumstances were too strong for him. Great as were the dangers that threatened the European provinces of the Empire, it was on the Asiatic frontier that he found his presence more imperatively demanded. A revolution in Parthia had restored the ancient dynasty of the Persian kings, or, at least, a family that claimed that character. The new line of kings was now represented by a certain Shapar, or, as the Romans spelt it, Sapor. Armenia, long a bone of contention between Rome and Parthia, was overrun ; the garrisons on the Euphrates were forced to surrender. Valerian hastened to meet the new enemy, encountered him near Edessa, and suffered a crushing defeat. We know next to nothing of what happened except that the legions were led, by the folly of their chief or the treachery of those whom he trusted, into a hopeless situation ; that their attempt to cut their way through the hosts of the enemy was repulsed with great loss ; and that in the end Valerian had to surrender himself to Sapor, and that the legions laid down their arms. There was nothing now

to stop the Parthian king. The splendid city of Antioch was taken and plundered or burnt. He even crossed the Taurus range, and captured the wealthy city of Tarsus. It is impossible to say where he would have stopped, had it not been for the courage and ability of Odenatus, the governor of Palmyra and his wife Zenobia. It was they, not the Roman arms that compelled the Parthians to make their way back to their own country.

Valerian was never released from captivity. Stories—whether true or no it is impossible to say—were told of the humiliations to which he was subjected by the Persian king. Whenever Sapor mounted his horse, he used to put his foot on the neck of his captive. And when the unhappy man was released by death, his skin was stuffed with straw, and the figure preserved in one of the Persian temples, “a more real monument of triumph,” remarks Gibbon, “than the fancied trophies of brass and marble so often erected by Roman vanity.” Whatever may be the truth about this or that fact, it is certain that this period witnessed the infliction of two unprecedented humiliations on the dignity of Rome, one Emperor slain in battle, another kept in a dishonourable captivity.

II

A CENTURY OF REVIVAL

AN observer of the calamities and disgraces which overtook the Empire in what I have called "A Century of Disgrace," might have supposed that the end was at hand. But an ancient institution does not perish so easily. The Empire still possessed a great prestige, an organisation of government which had been worked out by a succession of able statesmen and rulers, and an army with numberless traditions of victory. Given an able leader, there would certainly be a revival of vigour, or, to say the least, a check to the progress of decay. A better time began with the death of Gallienus, the son of Valerian, in A.D. 268. He perished, it is doubtful whether by treachery or accident, in one of the numberless conflicts that occurred during this period between the possessor of the imperial throne and the numerous pretenders who aspired to it. His successor was a soldier

of humble origin, though he bore the old patrician name of Claudius. He had soon an opportunity of showing his qualities as a soldier. In the year after his accession to the throne a huge army of Goths and of other tribes who were accustomed to fight under their standard invaded the provinces south of the Danube. Claudius hastened to encounter them, and fought a great battle at Nissa in Servia in which 50,000 of the barbarians are said to have perished. Little is known of the details of this or indeed of any of the conflicts of the time; the chronicles of the age are wanting in the power of description and, indeed, in all literary gift, but we gather that the legions were beginning to give way when Claudius brought up reinforcements to their help. These fresh troops fell upon the barbarian rear, and wholly changed the fortunes of the day. But the victory of Nissa did not put an end to the war. Nor, indeed, did Claudius live to finish it. He did enough, it is true, to win the title of Gothicus, and to deserve it better than was sometimes the case with Emperors who were similarly honoured.¹ But he died—the victim, it was

¹ Domitian, for instance, was styled *Germanicus*, though his campaigns against the Germans were marked by disaster rather than by victory.

said, of a plague which had originated in the barbarian camp—after a reign of little more than two years, and left the completion of the war to his successor Aurelian.

Aurelian's reign was but little longer than that of Claudius. It began in August, 270, and was ended in March, 275, by assassination; but this brief period was crowded with great achievements. In dealing with the Goths he showed that he was a statesman as well as a soldier. After conclusively proving to them that he could vanquish them in the field, he turned them, by a seasonable generosity, from enemies into friends. It had become evident that the province which Trajan had added to the Empire could no longer be held with advantage; Dacia, accordingly, was given up to the Goths, and a tribe associated with them, of whom we shall hear again, the Vandals. The Goths remained loyal to Rome, till, as we shall see, they were forced into hostility. They even furnished a body of auxiliary cavalry to the imperial army.

But while Aurelian was thus engaged, Italy and even Rome were endangered by the attack of another multitude of the same German race. The Alemanni, a people of which we know next to nothing except the stock to which they be-

longed,¹ suddenly crossed the Roman frontier, and made their way as far as the north of Italy. The armies of the Empire were engaged elsewhere, and the invaders plundered the country without hindrance. They had even made their way back to the Danube when Aurelian encountered them. It is not easy to understand the story of what followed. The Emperor outmanœuvres the barbarians, and reduces them to such extremities that they beg for peace. When their envoys are introduced to the presence of Aurelian, there is a sudden change of circumstances. The Alemanni, instead of imploring pardon, dictate conditions. They must have a subsidy, if Rome would have them as allies. The Emperor dismisses them with an indignant refusal, and we expect to hear of the severest punishment being inflicted on them. Nothing of the kind occurs. Aurelian, called elsewhere by some demand which he cannot refuse, disappears from the scene, and leaves the completion of the business to his lieutenants. They neglect their duty or fail to perform it; the Alemanni take the opportunity, break through the *cordon* of troops which had been formed round them, and make their way back

¹ The historians of the time do not give them the same name.

to Italy. We next hear of them as ravaging the territory of Milan. Aurelian orders the legions to follow them with all the speed that they could manage, and hastens himself to defend Italy with a quickly moving force, partly composed, it is interesting to observe, of auxiliary cavalry levied from the new settlers in Dacia. The struggle that followed is not what we should have expected after hearing of the straits to which the Alemanni had been reduced at the Danube. At Piacenza the Roman army came perilously near to destruction. The barbarians fall unexpectedly upon the legions as they march carelessly through a wooded defile. Only by the greatest exertions does Aurelian rally them. But though the army is saved from destruction, it cannot arrest the progress of the enemy. When we next hear of them the barbarians have advanced more than a hundred miles nearer to Rome. Near the Metaurus, and not far from the spot where Hasdrubal had perished, the Emperor overtook them. This time they must have suffered a serious defeat, for their third and last appearance in Northern Italy, near Pavia (the ancient *Ticinum*). Historians relate that they were exterminated, and this is probably true, for it was the fate that would naturally overtake unsuccessful invaders of Italy.

I may mention in the very briefest way that Aurelian restored the Roman power in the East by overthrowing Zenobia, who, since the death of her husband Odenathus, had remained independent at Palmyra, and in the West by putting an end to the usurpation of Tetricus, who had maintained his independence in Gaul and Britain for several years. To all appearance, the Empire was restored to what it had been at the death of Marcus Aurelius.

III

THREE DEADLY BLOWS

TO tell the story of the last century of the Roman Empire in any fullness of detail would be impossible in any space that I can command. I must limit myself to a narrative of what may truly be called the three most significant incidents in that period.

The first of the fatal blows which may be said to have brought the Empire of Rome to an end was dealt almost against the will of those from whom it came. The policy of Aurelian in ceding Dacia to the Goths had been, on the whole, successful. They had been contented and even friendly, finding sufficient employment for their arms in extending their power among their barbarous neighbours, and furnishing not a few recruits to the imperial armies. In 375 they were disturbed by reports of an invading host which

was advancing from the north and east. These reports pictured the new-comers as hideous in appearance and cruelly savage in character. We are now used to the Tartar countenance, but to Europe in the fourth century the broad, almost beardless face, flat nose, eyes set wide apart, and squat figure, were as frightful as they were strange. As for the savagery of the Huns—for so the new-comers were called—rumours were scarcely exaggerated. The Goths had themselves in former times been scarcely less ferocious in their manners, but they had now for several generations been in contact with civilisation, and the Christian faith had begun to find its way among them. Both divisions of the nation, known by the names of Ostrogoths and Visigoths, were successively defeated by the invading host, which showed military skill as well as courage. The Ostrogoths submitted, as a body, to the invaders, though a considerable minority contrived to escape, taking with them their infant king. The Visigoths resolved to throw themselves on the protection of Rome. They sent envoys to the Emperor (Valens), and begged that they might be permitted to cross the frontier. After some delay Valens gave his consent, and the whole nation—a few scattered companies

excepted—was transported across the Danube. The numbers of the refugees may be calculated at a million, as there were no less than two hundred thousand males of the military age. It had been stipulated that all weapons should be given up. But this condition was very generally evaded. The corrupt officials of the Empire were ready, for a consideration, to permit the Gothic warriors to keep their arms. Having thus allowed them to remain formidable, they proceeded, with almost incredible folly, to insult and oppress them in every possible way. They robbed them of their wives and children, and sold at extortionate prices the food which the Imperial Government was bound to provide without cost. Meanwhile the generals of Valens neglected to maintain the defences of the Danube, and a large body of Ostrogoths who had been refused a passage over the river, took the matter into their own hands, and crossed over into the province. The two branches of the nation were not long in coming to an understanding, and making common cause against their oppressors. It was not long before the smouldering fire burst into flame. The first battle took place not far from Pravadi,¹ where

¹ See p. 349.

Claudius had defeated the Goths many years before. We know little about this conflict except its result, which, as the historian of the Goths (or, as he calls them, *Getæ*) puts it, was to bring about a state of things in which the Goths were no longer strangers and foreigners, but members of the State and lords of the country which they occupied. An indecisive engagement followed at a spot called *Salices* ("The Willows") in the low land near the mouth of the Danube, but the great battle of the war was fought at Hadrianople. Valens, who had spent a considerable time, with little profit to the Empire, at Antioch, returned in the early summer of 378 A.D. to Constantinople. After a brief rest in that city, where he made some changes in the chief commands of his army, he marched northwards and fortified a camp under the walls of Hadrianople. It was debated between the Emperor and his chief advisers whether or no they should fight at once. There were many reasons for delay. Valens occupied a strong position, and had the command of unlimited supplies. The barbarians, on the other hand, were ill-provided in every respect, and would most certainly grow weaker the longer they were compelled to keep the field. Another power-

ful consideration was, or should have been, the approach of Gratian, Emperor of the West, to whom Valens had appealed for help, and who was now advancing eastward by forced marches. Gratian had, indeed, sent a special messenger imploring Valens not to risk a battle before his arrival. Unfortunately this request had an effect exactly opposed to what had been intended. Valens was anxious to secure for himself all the glory which would come from the victory which he confidently expected, and when Gratian begged for delay, he at once resolved to fight.

It was the height of summer, and Valens was scarcely acting with judgment when he moved out of his position under the walls of Hadrianople, and commenced a march which could not be expected to be accomplished under four hours—the distance to be traversed was ten miles—with the intention of attacking the enemy. In any case the men would have been not a little wearied or exhausted; as it was, one wing of the army considerably out-marched the other, and that which had lagged behind was forced to hurry that it might take its proper place in the line. Even after this time was wasted, for Valens was amused with proposals for a truce or cessation of arms which

the enemy had no intention of acting on. One of the imperial generals, possibly impatient of the delay, made an attack which was easily repulsed. The Gothic cavalry, in reply, charged with fatal effect. The Roman horsemen fled before them, and the legions, left alone in an open plain to face an enemy superior in force, were practically destroyed. The fate of Valens is uncertain; but the more generally received account was that, having been severely wounded, he was carried off the field to a cottage in the neighbourhood. Before any way of escape could be discovered, before even his wound could be dressed, the cottage was surrounded by the enemy. The inmates did their best to defend it, and the Goths, impatient of delay, set fire to it and burnt it to the ground. Valens, anyhow, was never seen again. The army of Rome was swept from the earth at Hadrianople as completely as it had been at Cannæ, but Rome had lost in the five centuries that separated these two great disasters her power of recovery.

The next great blow received by Rome came also from Gothic hands. The first mention of Alaric shows us a significant change in Roman policy. The Gothic chief

holds a high command in the armies of the Empire, and was employed by the ruler in possession in his struggle against a pretender. When he turned against his employer it was because he was disappointed in his ambition of filling a yet higher post. There is no need to describe his career at length. A brief outline shows plainly enough, not only his genius, for he was certainly a statesman and a soldier of great ability, but the deplorable weakness of the Empire. At first, indeed, he had an antagonist who was more than his match. In 396 he openly revolted, and marched into Greece, which he plundered without meeting with any resistance, for the country had long since passed into a condition of helpless servitude. But he was pursued by Stilicho, himself a barbarian by birth—a soldier who was equal to any of the great commanders of the past. The Goths found themselves shut up in the Peloponnesus. Their leader, however, contrived to extricate himself from his difficulties, transporting his army across the western end of the Gulf of Corinth, and occupying Epirus. The next thing in his extraordinary career was that he was appointed by the Emperor of the East—the Eastern and Western Empires had been finally severed

four years before¹—to be the Governor of the province of Illyricum. Here he was able to plan and prepare his schemes for the final conquest of Rome. That the opportunity for so doing should have been given by the power that should have been Rome's closest ally was a sure sign of the approaching ruin.

A few years after his establishment in Illyricum, Alaric, who had been in the meantime saluted king by his countrymen, felt himself equal to the task of invading Italy. Stilicho, however, was still in command of the Roman armies—now almost wholly recruited from barbarian tribes—and he proved himself more than a match for the Gothic king. The great battle of Pollentia (in Northern Italy) was contested with more than usual stubbornness. Fortune changed sides more than once. Stilicho's genius prevailed, however, in the end; the Goths were driven from the field; their camp was taken, and Alaric's wife fell into the hands of the conquerors. But the great leader was not yet beaten. His cavalry, the principal strength of his forces, had not

¹ When the Emperor Theodosius died (394 A.D.) his two sons Honorius and Arcadius became emperors of the West and East respectively.

been broken, and he formed the bold scheme of marching upon Rome. This, however, was given up; he accepted, in preference, the offer of Stilicho, who proposed to allow him to depart unharmed from Italy, on condition of his becoming for the future an ally of Rome. He did not, however, intend to perform his part of the bargain. On the contrary, he formed a scheme for possessing himself of Gaul. But his plans were betrayed to Stilicho, and he suffered another defeat in the neighbourhood of Verona which was not less disastrous than that of Pollentia. Even then, however, he was a formidable enemy, and Stilicho allowed him to retire from Italy, rather than drive him to extremities.

After four years, years of incessant drain upon the resources of the Empire, Alaric prepared to renew his attempt on Rome. Stilicho was dead. Possibly he had deserved his fate, for he had certainly cherished ambitions which did not become a loyal subject. But there was no one to take his place at the head of the legions. Certainly Alaric met with no opposition as he marched through Italy, finally pitching his camp under the walls of Rome. Resistance was impossible; it only remained to see what was the smallest price at which

the enemy could be bought off. Two envoys from the Senate approached the king. They began by counselling prudence. It would be well, they said, if Alaric did not drive a brave and numerous people to despair. "The thicker the hay, the easier to mow," was the king's answer. When asked to name the ransom which he was willing to accept, he declared that he must have all the gold and silver that they possessed, all their valuables, and all the slaves of barbarian birth. "What then do you leave us?" was the question which the envoys in their consternation put to him. "Your lives," he answered. In the end, however, he consented to a compromise, by which he was to receive five thousand pounds of gold, thirty thousand pounds of silver, and a quantity of precious articles, silk, cloth, and spices.

The respite thus purchased was but brief. The ministers of the Emperor, safe themselves in the fortress of Ravenna, behaved with a strange mixture of weakness and treachery. Their crowning act of folly was to permit a barbarian chief in their pay to make an unprovoked attack on a detachment of Goths. This was indeed destroyed, but the victory was dearly purchased. Alaric, justly indignant

at such behaviour, broke off all negotiations, and marched on Rome. The Senate prepared to make all the resistance possible. But nothing was really done. Some traitors within the city opened one of the gates, and the Goths made their way into the city, which was given over to slaughter and plunder for six days. Rome may be said to have thus lost for ever her claim to rule the world. But her cup of humiliation was not yet full.

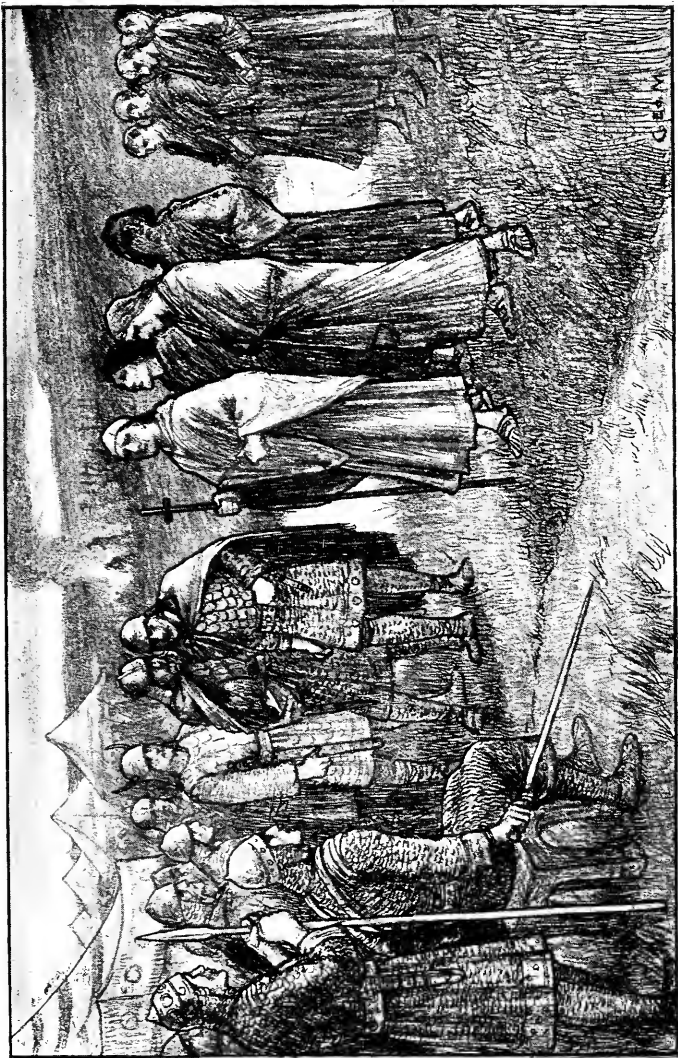
Alaric did not long survive the conquest of Rome. He died in the same year, and was buried—so, indeed, the story runs—in the channel of a stream whose waters had been diverted for the time, the labourers who performed the work being slaughtered to keep the secret of his resting-place from being ever divulged.

But Rome was to fall into the power of a conqueror yet more powerful and more ferocious. Attila was a Hun, and is said to have even exaggerated in his personal appearance all the characteristic deformities of his race. The boundaries of the Empire can hardly be defined, but it is certain that it was of enormous extent. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that it reached from China to the Rhine. The hosts that followed him were almost

beyond counting. For once the incredible numbers in which the historians of antiquity delight were no exaggeration. It is probably a modest estimate of his host to say that it consisted of half a million combatants.

Powerful as he was, the king of the Huns was not permitted to pursue his course without opposition. Rome could still produce or rather adopt great soldiers—Aëtius, the great antagonist of Attila, was a Scythian by birth as Stilicho was a Vandal—and great soldiers can always find men to follow them. In the earlier part of Attila's reign,¹ his operations were carried on within the limits of the Eastern Empire. In 450 he attacked the West, one of his pretexts being the refusal of the Emperor Valentinian III. of his proposals for the hand of the Princess Honoria. He crossed the Rhine with a huge army at Strasburg, and marched on Orleans. But Aëtius was prepared for him. A great battle was fought at Châlons-sur-Marne, the last successful effort of the Roman arms. One of the notable features of the battle is the division of the Goths, the Ostrogoths following the standard of Attila,

¹ He succeeded to the throne in 434 in partnership with his brother, and by this brother's death, or murder, as some said, became the ruler of the nation in 445.



ATTILA AND LEO.

while the Visigoths fought for Rome. The loss of men amounted to between two and three hundred thousand, but it was not unequally divided. Aëtius could not prevent the retreat of Attila, who retired into Eastern Europe, where he spent some months in recruiting his army.

Early in the following year he crossed the Alps, descended into Italy, and after capturing and totally destroying the city of Aquileia, marched Romewards. He never reached the city, indeed. Not far from Mantua he was met by three ambassadors, one of them the bishop of Rome known as Leo the Great. They brought the offer of a complete submission. The Emperor no longer refused the condition which he had before peremptorily rejected. The Hunnish king was to have the hand of the Princess Honoria, and with her, as Gibbon epigrammatically puts it, "an immense ransom or dowry." The marriage never took place, for Attila died in the following year, but he had inflicted on Rome a humiliation even greater than that which she had suffered at the hand of Alaric.

One more event I must record, because in a way it completes this great period of history. In 475 a youth who bore the name of Romulus

and the nickname of Augustulus was raised to the throne by his father Orestes, who secured for a time control of such armies as still obeyed the Empire. In the following year Orestes was defeated and slain, and his son permitted to abdicate. Italy passed into the hands of Odoacer, king of the Heruli. The Old World had passed away and the New had begun.

EPILOGUE

I TAKE it for granted that none of my readers doubt the existence of a definite purpose—some may prefer to call it a tendency—in human history. Writers on this subject have often been accused of dwelling too much on war. But war is the ultimate expression of human will, and war, with all its horrors and losses, has worked, we are glad to believe, for the general good. The fittest among the nations have survived. We cannot estimate the loss which mankind would have suffered if the great military monarchies of the East had crushed out of existence the insignificant tribe which was to be the world's teacher in righteousness. Something of the same kind may be seen in what is called secular history.

Greece struggled bravely, against what must have seemed almost hopeless odds, to preserve herself from Persian domination. If the eleven thousand "Men of Marathon" had been trodden

under foot by the hosts of Persia, the Athens of the fifth century, with its free political life and unrivalled intellectual development, would not have existed. A sterile despotism, without literature or art, would have taken its place, and the world would have been incalculably the poorer for the exchange.

What is true of the struggle between Greece and Persia is true also of the great conflict, lasting for more than two centuries, in which the Sicilian Greeks, with now and then a little help from the motherland, held their own against Carthage. Persia and Carthage, though differing much from each other, were equally hostile to the essential principles of Western civilisation.

Little need be said as to the issue of the wars between Rome and Carthage. Rome, indeed, took up the cause for which Greece had contended. It is impossible to conceive a Carthaginian Empire exercising a world-wide sway with anything like the beneficial results for which the world has to thank the dominion of Rome. Carthaginian politics and morals, as far as we have any knowledge of them, seem to have been narrow and inhuman.

When we come to the conquests of Alexander, we are not able, it must be confessed,

to see our way so plainly. We may perceive, however, in it the spread of Greek influence over Western Asia. That influence had already been at work. Greek colonies had been planted far to the east; the Oriental nations had been much affected by Greek thought and manners. Alexander's brief career—it lasted but eleven years—did much to promote this Hellenizing process.

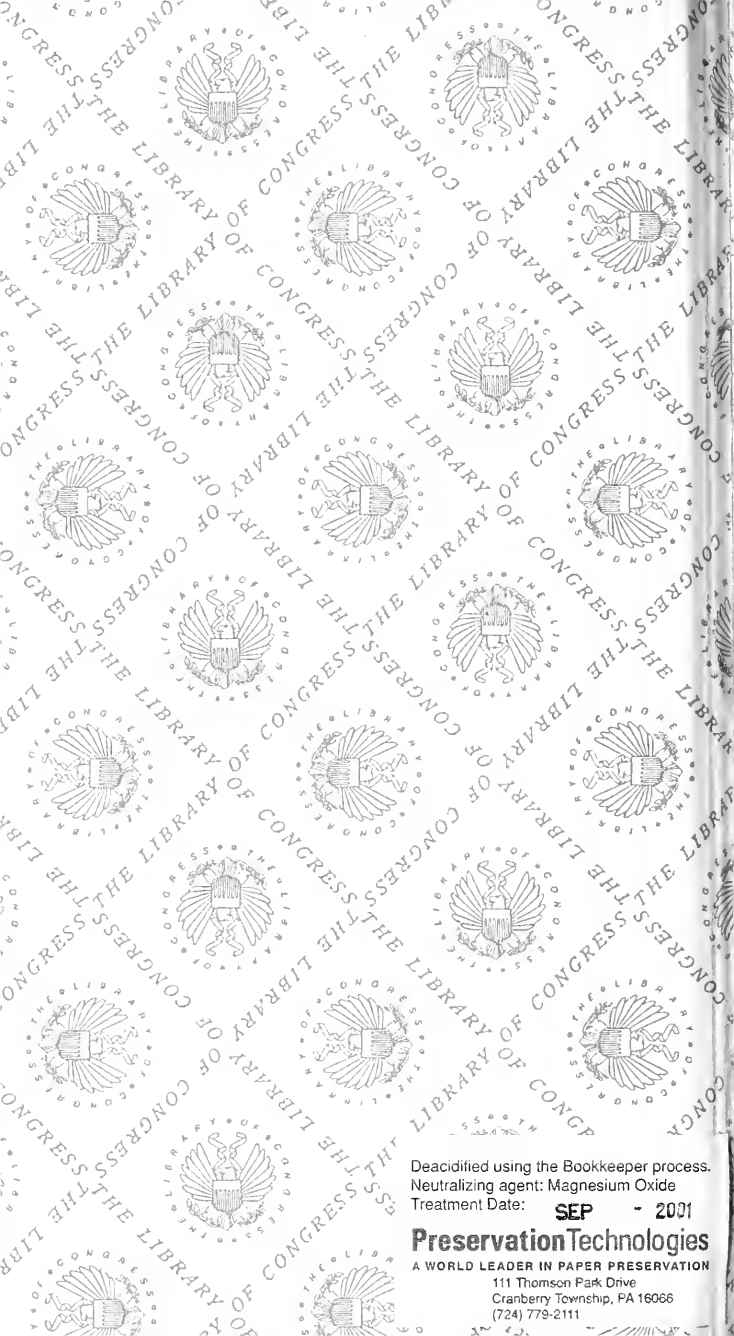
The empire of the great conqueror fell to pieces at his death, but two Greek kingdoms, to speak only of his Eastern dominion, were built out of the ruins. It was in these kingdoms that some of the earliest victories of Christianity were won. Given to the world by a Semitic tribe, our faith used largely for its spread Greek means, of which a common Greek language is the most obvious.

We need not prove that it was for the lasting good of the world that Rome was not crushed by the Celtic invaders of 390 B.C. or the Teutonic swarm of 112 B.C. It is equally plain that the development of the human race was largely helped by the subsequent spread of the Empire, till it embraced all Europe west of the Rhine and south of the Danube, all Northern Africa, and Asia west of the Euphrates. It is enough to say that Roman law is a dominating

power in most of the codes of modern Europe, and an important element in all.

Finally, we have the overthrow of the Roman Empire by barbarians from the north and east. This overthrow may seem at first to be "chaos come again." So doubtless many thought at the time. Yet out of the turmoil of the fourth and the fifth centuries there came a new order, the order which we see in the Europe of to-day. The subject lies outside my province. I can only indicate the fact.



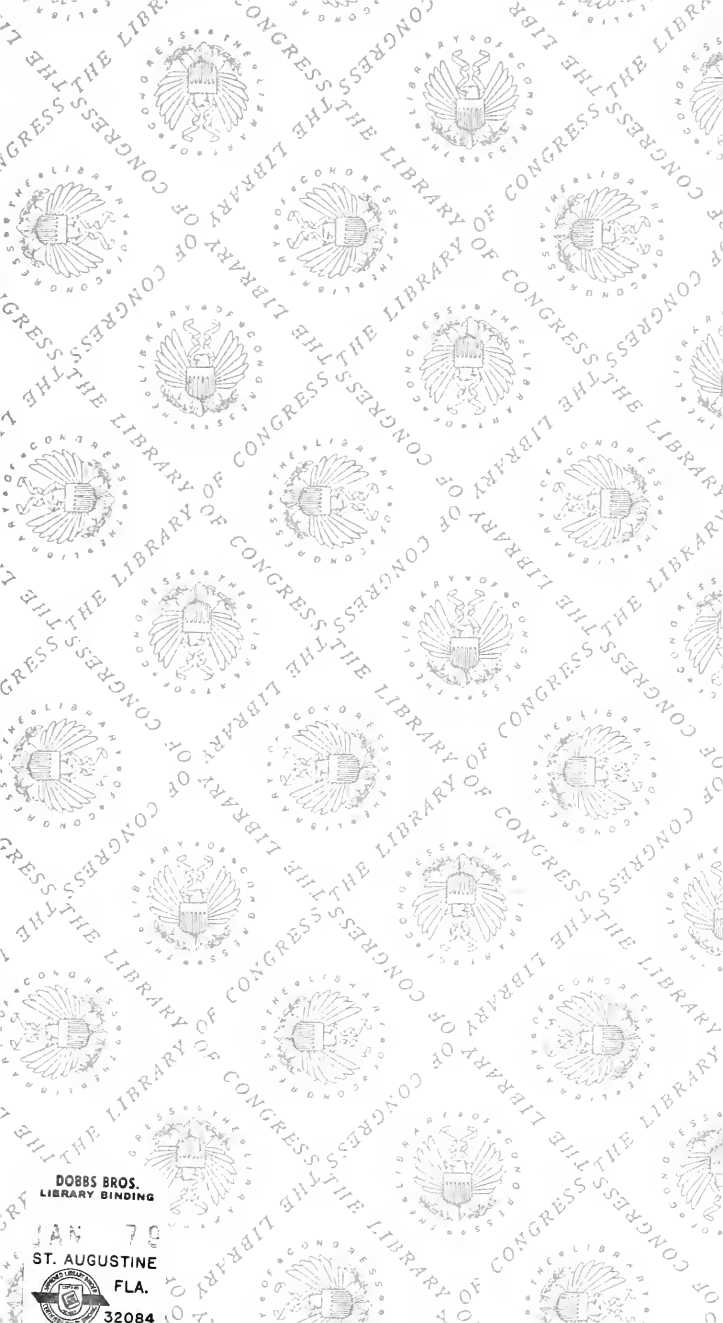


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